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Lucy Eliz. Woods



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MISS HAMILTON'S  
*LETTERS.*

---

VOLUME I.

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GEOMETRIE

PRINCIPES

DE

**LETTERS,**  
**ADDRESSED**  
**TO THE DAUGHTER**  
**OF**  
**A Nobleman,**  
**ON THE**  
**FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS AND MORAL**  
**PRINCIPLE.**

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**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**

---

**BY ELIZABETH HAMILTON,**  
**AUTHOR OF**  
**LETTERS ON THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF**  
**EDUCATION, &c. &c. &c.**

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**THE SECOND EDITION.**

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**1806.**





## PREFACE.

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**I**n submitting the ensuing pages to the ordeal of criticism, the author has no hopes of their passing unscorched through its tremendous flames: nor is she weak enough to expect that any thing she can urge will induce her judges to temper for her the heat of the burning ploughshare. Were she not provided with a talisman, of which she has in many instances proved the efficacy, she would shrink hopeless from the trial; but confident that upon this occasion it will not be found to have lost any of its virtue, she  
binds

binds it to her bosom, and proceeds, if not without apprehension, at least without dismay.

It is, indeed, only on the generous and candid, that the talisman of *good intentions* can exert its friendly influence; but it is the approbation of such minds alone, that she feels any solicitude to secure. Of such minds she is anxious to conciliate the esteem, and would spare no pains to purchase their dignified support—their unequivocal suffrage. In order to render her plea availing, she thinks it may be expedient to say a few words in explanation of the motives which induced her to write, and which led her to publish the letters of which these volumes are composed. The motives are extremely simple. She wrote to gratify her feelings, by keeping up this species of intercourse with a family of amiable children, to whose interests she had  
for

for some time devoted her sole attention; and who had greatly endeared themselves to her affections. A hope that she might even in absence continue to be of use to them, induced her to attempt making a fair and striking delineation of those objects to which she had endeavoured imperceptibly to lead their infant steps. The task was delicate as well as difficult. In order to avoid all interference with the peculiar opinions, or accidental prejudices of those, with whom it might be their lot to live, she endeavoured to keep as much as possible to general views; but as the mind must have made considerable progress before it is capable of embracing these, she found it necessary so to manage the chain of argument, as to give interest and importance to every separate link. In this she has not succeeded to her own satisfaction, and cannot hope that others will

will be more easily satisfied; yet still trusts that candour will make some allowance for the peculiar difficulties by which she was embarrassed,

It must be confessed, that whatever consideration may be given to the circumstances under which a book is written, by those who take a peculiar interest in the writer, it is only to the friends of the individual that they can with propriety be offered as an apology for any apparent defect. With the public, an author has, or ought to have, no other existence than as an author. On the present occasion, no other circumstances than those that are connected with such existence, shall therefore be brought forward.

To the writer of the Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education, so much indulgence has been hitherto shewn as to encourage her to hope, that in mentioning that work as the originating

originating cause of the present, she will do no injury to its interest.

Concerning the truth of the principles upon which that book was written no doubt had ever crossed her mind: but her reliance upon her own judgment has never had sufficient force to render her indifferent to the opinion of her superiors in wisdom and information. By the approbation of those best qualified to decide, her judgment was confirmed. Still, however, an opportunity was wanting for observing the consequences of a practical application of the principles she had endeavoured to unfold. When least expected that opportunity was presented, and presented under circumstances so peculiarly interesting, as promised an ample recompence for every sacrifice which her enthusiasm in the cause of education rendered her willing to make. Nor were her expectations

tations disappointed—for she has now the satisfaction of being able to speak with confidence of the inestimable advantages that result from a strict attention to the early development of the infant faculties. She can now from experience enforce her confirmed opinion of the influence of early association, in forming the disposition and character; and from experience likewise, can assure the timid and the doubtful, that the trouble of watching over these associations, sinks into nothing, when placed in comparison with the delight of which it opens a never failing source. The more her opportunities of observation have been enlarged, the more thoroughly is she persuaded, that the lessons which are given in the common routine of education, give little either of exercise or improvement to any faculty excepting memory: and  
that

that it is only in as far as it excites the mind to a vigorous exercise of all its various powers, that education will produce any salutary or permanent effect. To a task which requires such unwearied attention, she believes none to be competent, but those who are stimulated to the undertaking by such a disinterested zeal to promote the happiness of its objects, as will render every advance they make, a source of heart-felt satisfaction: a satisfaction not merely of that quiescent nature, which arises from the pleasure of success—but a satisfaction strong and vivid, and brightly illumined by the rays of hope.

Some idea of self mingles with the best of actions. Some notion of reward, either in this world or the next, however unconscious we may be of entertaining it, will, upon examination, be found to have given life to  
every

every virtuous exertion. While the mother, or the friend who with maternal affection performs a mother's duties, observes with rapture the progress that is daily making towards the formation of that perfect character, which had been delineated in her sanguine mind;—she looks forward, and beholds the darling object of her present cares, the support and comfort of her declining years; and anticipates in the sweet return of gratitude, an ample reward for all the anxieties of affection.

“ Soon as the playful innocent can prove  
A tear of pity or a smile of love,  
Or cons his murm’ring task beneath her care,  
Or lisps with holy look his ev’ning prayer,  
Or gazing mutely pensive, sits to hear  
The mournful ballad warbled in his ear;  
Now fondly looks, admiring *Hope* the while,  
*At every artless tear, and every smile.*”

PLEASURES OF HOPE.

The



The assistant of her labours is placed under circumstances widely different. She engages herself for a certain limited period to the performance of certain stipulated duties, to be paid for at a stipulated price. With whatever fidelity she may discharge her obligation, whatever pleasure she may derive from the consciousness of having amply discharged it; she looks not to the future character for her reward, for on the glory of the future character, she knows she is not destined to participate. From the degree in which the mechanical accomplishments have been acquired, she may reap advantage, as a recommendation of her abilities and skill: but in the virtues of the heart, she has no further interest, than such as a virtuous mind must ever take in promoting the cause of virtue. Her principles may lead  
her

her to sow the seeds ; but of the harvest of her labours she expects not to partake. Her hopes and her feelings are bounded to the present. Her cares, like those of the parents of the feathered race, cease with their flight into the world. The nestlings, in the beautiful language of the poet,

“ Demand the free possession of the sky,—  
 “ —————The surging air receives  
 “ Its plummy burden.—Their self-taught wings;  
 “ Winnow the warping element.—  
 “ Till vanished every fear; and every power  
 “ Roused into life, and action; high in air  
 “ The acquitted parents see their soaring race,  
 “ *And once rejoicing, never know them more.*”

From views that are necessarily circumscribed within the narrow limits of the period of early youth, it is not surprising that all that is most essential to the future conduct, should in so many instances appear to have been excluded.

The

The views of parents may, it is true, be still more narrow and confined; but they are not *necessarily* so. If parents look not beyond the present moment, if the real interests and future happiness of their children occupies no place in their thoughts, they will doubtless leave the formation of their characters to chance,—but they will do it at the risk of having their own future hours embittered by many a heartfelt sorrow.

Parents may become careless or indifferent; but they never can be divested of all interest in the conduct of their offspring. That conduct must even to the close of their existence, have power to kindle the glow of satisfaction or the blush of shame! Were parents to anticipate these sensations, as the certain result of the degree in which they had attended to the impressions made upon the infant mind,

mind, they would require no exhortations to attention. In a regard to their own happiness they would have an incentive sufficiently powerful to animate them to every necessary exertion.

Minds susceptible of the ardent feelings of friendship and affection, may become little less interested in the welfare of an adopted family, than if bound by the parental tie : but to such minds the fascinating endearments of infant innocence ; the hopes inspired by the progressive expansion of the infant heart and understanding ; and the delight arising from anticipated views of the future character ; may eventually prove sources of the keenest misery ; as, should circumstances ever throw them to a distance from the objects of their tenderness, every hope that had been cherished, every care that had awakened vigilance,

lance, and every little circumstance that had called forth the fondness of the heart, will give additional poignancy to the pang of separation.

From whatever point the subject is viewed, the author perceives additional reason to enforce a consideration of the advantages that are certainly to be derived from a regular and early cultivation of the faculties of the mind, and the affections of the heart. She believes that were their cultivation to become a chief object of attention, there would, in the next generation, be little necessity for exhorting those who have a certain and unalienable interest in the future conduct of children, to take upon themselves a principal share in their instruction.

To those who really wish to perform this momentous duty, no hint that can be given upon the formation

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of

of religious and moral principle will be given in vain. A hope that the ensuing Letters might afford some degree of assistance in these important points, was a chief incitement to their publication. To the young, indeed, they are addressed, and to young minds that have been prepared by previous instruction for their perusal, the author flatters herself they may prove salutary—she assures herself they will at least prove safe.

As it was her aim to give a general and comprehensive view of the important truths which have been conveyed to us by divine revelation, she did not think it necessary to have recourse to other authority than the Bible for any thing that she advanced. She is not perfectly unapprised of the risk she may hereby have incurred. She knows there are those who consider every book in which they do not perceive

perceive the names of their favourite authors, as of doubtful tendency; who deem every one who is not declaredly of their party, as a certain enemy to all the doctrines which their party has most zealously espoused; and all who oppose its doctrines as in a state of utter reprobation. By such she will probably be at all events condemned. But as she would not willingly incur the disapprobation of any worthy person, she does not scruple to advance the plea of ignorance in mitigation of her offence. Of controversial theology she confesses herself to be deplorably ignorant, and despairs of ever being otherwise than ignorant; as, were she ever so much inclined to enter upon the study, she is too deficient in scholastic lore, to have any hopes of being able to pursue it, so as to become perfect mistress of all that has been said on both sides

of every question. Without such a degree of information, she should consider herself guilty of presumption and arrogance, were she to pretend to judge.

The opinions that are called orthodox, when rendered plain by being stripped of all technical phraseology, she finds in general exactly conformable to her own ; but she embraces them, not because they are sanctioned by particular names, but because they seem to her to be consonant to scripture. To the service of the church of England she for the same reason adheres, and would so adhere whether it were proved or disproved that Calvin or his friends had a hand in composing it. But while she thus adheres to the church, she cannot, for the aforementioned reasons, think it incumbent upon her in her present state of ignorance, to enter the lists as its champion.



pion, and to hurl defiance upon all who think they may be saved though they come not within its pale: Let those who have power for the contest, arm themselves for the combat ; she has been taught to consider her sex as precluded from the field of strife. Nor is a sense of propriety the only motive that deters her from engaging in the war of controversy. Doubts concerning the consequences which such warfare might have upon her own mind, and upon the minds of others, would at all events impose restraint. From all she has observed it appears to her, that, with whatever temper abstract propositions may be maintained by those who thoroughly understand them; they are seldom supported by those have not that advantage, without some violence to the spirit of charity. The propositions may be just and true; but the zeal that  
violates

violates charity converts them into means of inflaming the pride and animosity of party. If the time ever arrives in which it shall be made clear to her that the spirit of party tends to advance the interests of religion, the spirit of party it will then become her duty to acquire. While her conviction leads to an opposite conclusion, no friendship for the individuals of which any party is composed; no respect for the talents, or the learning, or the worth of any who arrange themselves beneath its banners, will lead her to assume its badge. Her earnest wish is to see all Christians join in anxious endeavours to spread the knowledge and the spirit of the Gospel. Whoever labours in this vineyard ought not to look to the praise of their fellow-labourers, but to the Master of the vineyard for their reward. If the following little work  
is

is acceptable in his sight, it will have been accepted as a labour of love. It interferes with no one's opinions; it clashes with no one's interests. It may be described in the words of the celebrated Bishop of Down and Connor in his epistle dedicatory to the sermons preached at the Golden Grove.

"The special design of the whole  
 "is to describe the greater lines of  
 "duty by special arguments; and if  
 "any witty censurer shall observe  
 "that I tell him nothing but what  
 "he knew before, I shall be con-  
 "tented with it, and rejoice that he  
 "was so well instructed; and wish  
 "also that he needed not a *remem-*  
 "*brancer*:—and that I profess not  
 "to make curious inquiries after NEW  
 "NOTHINGs, but pursuances of OLD  
 "TRUTHs."



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## LETTER I.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY ~~Elizabeth~~ *Bingham*

*daughter of Lord Bingham*  
West Ham, Nov. 14, 1805.

*My dear Lady Elizabeth,*

THE correspondence, from which I promised myself so much pleasure; has, by the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances, been interrupted; but the tender affection, which led me so willingly to embrace the proposal of entering into it, remains unimpaired. Of the nature and strength of that affection, you have had so many convincing proofs, that, young as you are, I have no apprehension of their being ever effaced from your remembrance.

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The full assurance I possess of having gained the love, the confidence, and esteem of the most amiable and engaging of children is, I confess, extremely gratifying to my heart ; it is the more gratifying from a consciousness of never having permitted any consideration to interfere with what appeared to me the great and real interests of the precious objects of my tenderness. It is, indeed, a great consolation to reflect, that in every recollected proof of the strength of my attachment you will be able to trace the undeviating steadiness of the principles by which it was guided ; nor have I any doubts concerning the nature of the impression they left upon your mind.

The hopes I formed respecting you, my beloved child, will, I trust, be amply realised : and, though the time I had the pleasure of spending  
with

with you was too short to admit of any thing like a regular development of the plan I had formed for your improvement, I trust the corner stone which I laid will be retained as the foundation of the future superstructure. The emotion, with which you received many of the important truths it was my delight to unfold to you, gives me reason to hope, that the foundation thus laid will not be easily shaken. But though many of these truths may retain a place in your memory, your recollection with regard to others may be imperfect. Even those remembered with accuracy will be recalled in a detached form, and not as parts of one great and connected whole. They will have the force of precepts, but they will not have the power of principles.

The primary object of the letters which I have it now in contemplation

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to

to address to you is to supply this deficiency. Of the various motives which have determined me to give them in a public form, I shall only mention that which immediately concerns yourself; and which I hope will be sufficient to obviate all the objections that can be made against it.

No communication of my sentiments would, I am persuaded, have been received by you with indifference; but how could I expect that, at your tender age, letters in manuscript would be preserved with care, or, if preserved, that they would be reperused in a regular series, so as to give them the advantage of connexion?

Nor is this all. Of written letters addressed to you, my dearest Lady Elizabeth, to you the benefit must have been exclusively confined. It is not so with my affection, which  
 embraces,



embraces, with almost equal warmth, every individual of that lovely circle, on which I have never looked but with emotions of delight; on which I can never think but with the most lively, the most heart-felt interest!

Those instructions which your superior years and more ripened intellect rendered it proper, in the time we spent together, to address exclusively to you, would, had circumstances permitted me to prolong my visit, have been in substance repeated to your sisters. That they will now be repeated with the same effect as when I had it in my power to watch the favourable moment of impression, and to seize the opportunity which passing events afforded for illustrating their utility, it were vain to expect. But they will still have these advantages over the instructions to be found in other books,  
they

they will be associated in the memory with the recollection of those blissful hours, when the newly awakened mind first learned to exert its powers of observation; when the sports of infancy were found a source of delight and of instruction; when the understanding was first taught to reason, and the heart to feel;—above all, they will be remembered as the parting gift of a fond, an indulgent, and ever faithful friend!

## LETTER II.

*My dearest Lady Elizabeth,*

YOU are too well acquainted with my sentiments to render it necessary to inform you that there is, in my opinion, ONE great object in education, to which all others should be subservient, with which no other should interfere, and in comparison with which all other objects are as dust in the balance.

To learn to make such a use of all the talents which heaven has bestowed as shall lead to the attainment of everlasting glory, is the central point to which all our views and efforts ought  
to

to be directed : nor, unless our conceptions upon this subject are very dark and confused, shall we suffer any apprehension of being obliged to make a sacrifice of our happiness here, to the hopes of obtaining happiness hereafter. Did our happiness here consist in the unlimited gratification of every appetite and passion, this would certainly be the case ; but even the experience of childhood is sufficient to prove the contrary.

Did any of my dear little girls ever feel so happy, in the indulgence of a capricious humour, as they have done when, after having conquered the wayward inclination to disobedience, they have read in the eyes of their friends that approbation which their little hearts exulted in the consciousness of having merited? Through every stage of life the feelings in this respect will be the same. The conquest

quest gained over every inclination, which reason and religion teach us to subdue, will constantly be followed by a greater degree of happiness than the gratification of it could have procured.

To illustrate this truth was the chief aim of all the best philosophers of Greece and Rome. But you, my dear child, have been initiated in the doctrines of a philosophy more valuable than all they knew or taught; a philosophy, which, instead of laying down rules for the conduct in particular instances, extends its purifying influence to the inmost recesses of the heart. The delight with which you imbibed its sacred tenets, the deep impression which they made upon your mind, and the salutary influence which they evidently shed over your heart, have opened to me a source of hope with regard to you, which, I trust

trust in God, will never be exhausted. The morning hours we spent together will not, I flatter myself, be soon forgotten by either party; nor, while the promise you made me at parting, of pursuing the same practice, and commencing the studies of every day by reading a portion of the holy scripture, is on your part fulfilled, will the blessing, which seemed to rest upon them, be withdrawn.

In the holy scriptures you will find all that is necessary to make you "wise unto salvation." But it is not a mere speculative knowledge of all the truths which they contain, that will be thus effectual: for all that scripture teaches us is known, and acknowledged to be true, by thousands, who nevertheless continue to act just in the same manner as they would have acted, had they never heard of  
a God

a God or Saviour. Knowledge does not necessarily imply *principle*. How this happens, I shall hereafter explain.

It may, in the first place, be expedient to consider what we mean by *principle*. It is a term so often made use of that it must be familiar to your ear; but you know I am a great friend to accuracy, with regard to our notions respecting the meaning of the words we use; nor have I often found the precaution unnecessary, especially when a term is employed in more senses than one.

When we speak of the *first principle* of any thing, we mean something that is essential to its existence, and without which it could not be. Thus, we say that to believe in God is the *first principle* of all religion, because without a belief in God there could be no religion whatever,

whatever. We say likewise that truth and justice are first principles in morals, because truth and justice are essential to our notions of morality. But when we say that such a one has good or bad principles, I am afraid we do not always so thoroughly comprehend the full force of the expression.

To have good principles is not merely to know our duty, and to be furnished with the best motives for performing it; but to have this knowledge and these motives converted into active habits of the mind, so that whenever we are called to judge or to act, we may instantly and involuntarily judge and act as they prescribe.

The difference between a good education and a bad one, in my opinion is, that in the course of the former the young mind is *assisted* in transforming



transforming the precepts of religion and virtue into those habits of thinking and acting, which are termed ruling principles; and that in the latter, no such assistance is afforded.

This will explain to you why I took so much pains to induce you to bring every opinion and action to a certain test--a test to which you had in all cases previously yielded a full assent. It will explain to you, why I never thought, in any thing relative to moral conduct, mere *restriction* to be sufficient, but endeavoured to prompt even the youngest of you, to acquire a habit of *self-control* from a sense of interest and of duty.

At the distance to which I am now removed, I can no longer thus assist you: but of such assistance I trust you will never be entirely destitute. It is, however, no more than assistance that can be afforded you  
by .

by the most enlightened or zealous friends you can possibly be ever blessed with. They may give you precepts, but it is by your own practical exercise of the precepts taught, that they must be worked into the principles upon which your future character will depend.

I had the pleasure of witnessing in many instances, the spontaneous effects of this dawn of principle, in the children so dear to my affections: but it is by constant and habitual exercise that it can alone be confirmed; and as this exercise depends in a great measure on the force with which the precepts of religion and virtue recur to the mind, it is necessary that these precepts should be kept in your remembrance by frequent repetition. In this view my correspondence may still be serviceable.

While it was in my power to lay  
hold

hold on the favourable moment for impressing the mind with religious or moral sentiments, I often preferred indirect methods of instruction. Leaving to the care of your zealous and indefatigable governess to instruct you in the letter of the law, I endeavoured, in the hours of play and relaxation, to impress its spirit on the heart. My instructions, as they must now necessarily assume a graver form, so must they embrace a wider field than when drawn forth by the passing occurrences of the day, and confined to topics which you were fully prepared by previous information to comprehend. But I promise you, they shall be enlivened as much as possible by the sort of illustration best suited to your present taste. On parts of my subject that are yet new to you I may, perhaps, at first reading appear obscure.

I hope

I hope I shall seldom be altogether unintelligible : but whenever you meet with any thing that you do not perfectly understand, I would recommend it to you to mark the passage with your pencil, and, after you have gone through the whole, to return to it and give it the advantage of reconsideration. You will, however, as I trust, have little reason to complain of obscurity, provided you read with attention ; and it is only according to the degree of attention you bestow, that I expect you to profit by the perusal.

I consider it as your peculiar happiness, my dear Lady Elizabeth, that you have never learned to connect the idea of dulness, with subjects that are in their nature serious. Were it not for my knowledge of this favourable circumstance, I should scarcely dare to hope for your attention, where  
there

there is so little prospect of amusement; but I know that it is not with you always necessary to engage the fancy, in order to interest the heart.

When united to such a flow of spirits as you naturally possess, a taste for serious reading, and a relish for serious conversation, become a blessing of the first magnitude; for there is then no reason to apprehend that the youthful mind will lose its sprightly tone, by the force of any impressions made upon it by premature reflection. You know how little friendly I am to aught that is gloomy or austere. You know happiness to be my professed object, and that all to which my arguments tend, is to persuade you never upon any account to sacrifice a greater portion of happiness to a lesser.

Children, and men, who are still  
but children past growing, are in  
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some respects upon the same footing. All are alike in training for a state to which they have not yet arrived. Childhood is a state of preparation for youth; youth for maturity; and maturity for that state of existence beyond the grave, of which this very analogy might give us some notion, but of which the goodness of God has in mercy assured us, through Jesus Christ.

Upon a very little consideration you will perceive, that the well-being and happiness of each of these states of existence, depend much upon the preparation made for it in the preceding state. Children who have been very much neglected in infancy, and whose faculties have never been exercised, will find their tasks much more difficult than those who have been early taught to pay attention to objects of improvement. If, through  
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the agency of careless or wicked persons, they have acquired bad habits; they will suffer yet more severely; and if these bad habits are not resolutely conquered, they will suffer through life; accumulating in all its stages sin, and reaping in all its stages sorrow. Nor are we authorized, either by reason or scripture, to conclude, that the consequences will with this life end: for as you see in the case I have stated, the youth suffers for what was done or neglected in childhood, and the man suffers for having neglected the opportunity of improvement in youth; it seems to be but a continuation of the same chain of consequences, that he should in the ensuing state suffer, for what he had done or neglected in the last. But this most dreadful penalty, it was in his own power, by timely repentance, to have averted. He might in

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youth,

youth, by application, have made up for the neglect of childhood. He might by self-restraint have controlled the passions which had been fostered by indulgence, and by storing his mind with the best motives, and acting up to the degree of knowledge he possessed, have prepared himself for entering on the future with advantage. Even after he had reached maturity, the sins of his youth might by penitence have been cancelled. But though, while life is granted, the gates of mercy stand open, those who have not in the morning of life been put upon the path that leads to them, will not be apt to explore it when the day draws near its close! To that path there is no certain and infallible guide, but fixed and steady principles.

That much may be done towards the formation of religious and moral principles,



ciples, even in the early years of life, I have always been inclined to believe, and the experience which I obtained during the last summer, has transformed belief into certainty. To make children sensible of the advantage to be derived from making slight sacrifices of the present will, in order to attain a greater degree of future happiness, seemed much more difficult in theory, than I found it to be in practice. A provision seems indeed to have been made for this necessary part of the education of the human race, through all the successive stages of life, as in none of them are we permitted the gratuitous enjoyment of what appears to our imaginations the greatest good. The unlimited indulgence of the prevailing desire, is in general recompensed by future misery; nor is future happiness in any of the stages of life, to be purchased

chased without a certain portion of present pain. If virtue be on one side connected with felicity, it is on the other linked to self-denial: and if wisdom and honour are the companions of knowledge, knowledge is herself the offspring of diligence and application.

All the decorums of life, all the graces which constitute the charm of polished manners, are the offspring of restraint imposed on inclination; nor till they have acquired the force of habits, are they adopted by nature as her own. Before this can be accomplished, how many painful sacrifices must be paid!

When I affirm that labour and self-denial are the appointed tutors of the human race, to whom all must submit, who would attain to excellence; I do not wish to check the playful vivacity of the youthful fancy, by anticipated

anticipated views of suffering and sorrow. The doctrine which I now inculcate, is indeed of such extensive application, as to embrace every state and period of our existence: but Providence which wisely ordereth all things, while it has rendered the wholesome discipline of restraint alike necessary, in youth and in age, to future happiness and glory, has with regard to childhood softened the rigour of the decree, by bestowing such an elasticity of spirits, as prevents any bad effects from momentary dejection. The instant restraint is taken off, the light heart rebounds to joy. The tear of sorrow is arrested in the eye of innocence by the smile of pleasure. The sigh of disappointment is no sooner breathed than it is forgotten!

It is not the child, but the parent, or those who without a parent's name  
experience

experience the yearnings of parental tenderness, that are then the real sufferers. I know not that the virtue of fortitude can be put to a severer test, than when called on to inflict any degree of pain on the objects of affection.

To check that gaiety, which is perhaps the sole enlivener of existence; to enforce obedience at the moment that one wishes to impart delight; to cross inclination when the heart dissolves in tender love; and to suffuse with tears those angel eyes, which beam their sweetness on the soul, requires no mean effort of resolution. Unless when the parent's mind is blessed with such powers of comprehension, as to see clearly what sacrifices the future good demands, and possesses sufficient firmness to make the sacrifice demanded, it is not to be expected that such efforts will be made.

made. But when they at any time are made by a fond and indulgent friend, it will be to an amiable child a source of future happiness and gratitude, May you, my amiable young friend, profit alike by the indulgence which anticipates your wishes, and by the disappointments which cross them! May the one increase benevolence, without impairing the power of self-control, and the other teach you resignation, without lessening benevolence! Adieu,

West Ham, Nov. 21st, 1805;

## LETTER III.

**H**AVING in my last letter explained to you how much our happiness, through every period of life, depends on the conduct of the preceding period, I shall now give you the best directions in my power for improving this important truth into a principle of action.

It is impossible for us at an early period of life, or indeed at any period, to have clear views concerning the remote consequences of our actions; but if we do not live in a constant habit of self-deception, we can seldom be at a loss to know the motives

motives from which they proceed.  
To illustrate this.

Let us suppose a young lady, who, from not having been accustomed to exercise attention, finds the application necessary to the acquirement of any branch of education, to be accompanied with trouble and fatigue; and who therefore trifles away the time which she ought to have devoted to it. She cannot see all the consequences of thus idly wasting the season of improvement: but she knows that the indulgence of indolence is the motive, and that indolence is a vice, inasmuch as it is the foe of every virtue. She therefore errs against conviction; and, though she may not have very adequate notions of the disadvantages which will hereafter arise to her in consequence of her present neglect, she must have observed, or heard, that gross ignorance will  
expose

expose her to deserved contempt. She is conscious that she will be miserable in being despised ; but the temptation is at hand—the misery is at a distance. She therefore indulges the desire of the present moment, and drives the thoughts of the future from her mind.

Here you evidently see the difference between knowledge and principle. This young lady could discriminate between right and wrong in her motives, and could even foresee the consequences that would ensue as detrimental to her happiness, and yet her conduct was just the same as if she had neither felt the one, nor foreseen the other. But had her knowledge of what was right, habitually led to the practice of it, she would, as soon as she became conscious of what her duty was, have resolutely sacrificed the inclinations that opposed it.

Lady



Lady Fanny — had exactly the same disposition to indolence, the same aversion to study as the young lady mentioned above: but they were brought up in different notions of duty. Miss — had unfortunately learned to think, that because she was an heiress, and an only child, she was accountable to no one. Lady Fanny lived with an aunt, who called her to an exact account for every mis-spent moment. The value of time, and the important consequences of employing the hours of early youth to the best advantage, were so often presented to her mind, that whenever she found herself inclined to loiter away the morning in doing nothing, the conviction she had obtained of the impropriety of indulging in this way occurred to her recollection. She instantly shook off sloth, and applied herself with diligence to something useful.

useful. She at first indeed, and while she continued a little child, was chiefly influenced by the dread of incurring her aunt's displeasure, and the hope of obtaining her approbation, without any distinct notions concerning the moral reasons for either: but as she grew older and wiser, these appeared to her in their proper light; they accorded with the dictates of conscience, and with all those views of duty which religious instruction presented to her mind. Thus you perceive that the idea of accountableness, which in childhood extended only to the parent who instructed her, was the means of laying the foundation of those habits of mind, which led to the active discharge of every duty.

In our early years, we only consider ourselves accountable to those whom Providence has set over us. Religion extends our views. It exhibits

hibits to us the omnipotent and eternal Governor of the universe, as intimately acquainted with all our thoughts, and words, and actions. It gives us the assurance that he who is now our witness, will hereafter be our judge; and that to him we shall be obliged to render a strict account, not only of all we do, but of all we utter, and of all we think. It is in this idea of accountableness, when it becomes habitual to the mind, so as on all occasions instantaneously to present itself, and constantly to influence our practice, that we shall find the true security of virtue.

An idea of our being accountable to God, may float in the imagination, nay, it may in our serious moments become an object of our firm belief; but it is not until it dwells in our hearts, and restrains or prompts us in our actions, that it can be said to be  
to

to us a principle. The importance of thus fixing this invaluable principle in the heart, is too obvious to require explanation. Even they who have it not; they who never act but from the impulse of the present passion, will not deny its utility with regard to others. None can wish well to any individual, and not wish that his or her general conduct may be such as will be approved of God; and as a constant sense of being accountable to God for every action is the leading security for such a line of conduct, none will speak lightly of such a principle to those in whose virtue they have any interest.

This is one of the many instances in which vice is obliged to yield to virtue. The young lady whom I introduced a few pages ago, would not have chosen, while she indulged her own indolence, to recommend the same

same sort of indulgence to those on whose active exertions she depended for any of her comforts. By this test we may often be able to discover what is really right, and to detect what is really wrong. But to return to our more immediate subject.

In order to render the belief of our being accountable to God a governing principle, it is necessary that we, in the first place, endeavour to impress it upon our minds by seriously attending to what is said of it in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament; and in order to keep up the force of the impression, that we recal it frequently to our remembrance, particularly before and after the performance of any action that is not of a nature morally indifferent.

Now all this, you perceive, must be your own act and deed. All that any friend can do, is to stir you up to  
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the necessary exertion : but still I pray you to remember, that before it can be of any benefit to you, the principle must have been made your own. That you may meet with as little to obstruct you as possible in thus improving the idea of accountableness into an active principle, I shall now endeavour to put you on your guard against the obstacles you are most likely to meet with, so that they may either be avoided or overcome.

The first I shall mention arises from a temptation by which we are at all ages very apt to be beset, viz. measuring our attainments and deficiencies, our good and our bad qualities by a false standard ; and rejoicing in the flattering assurance we thence obtain, that we are no worse than others.

Miss Gloss affords an instance exactly in point. She lives with her  
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grand-mamma, a lady of great age and experience, and of excellent good sense, and who, notwithstanding her extreme fondness for her grandchild, sees and points out her faults. She never has, however, in any instance, been able to convince Miss Gloss that she was much to blame, or to lead her to any serious purpose of amendment: for unfortunately it has happened, that of every fault which her grandmother has discovered, some one or other of Miss Gloss's companions have been still more guilty than herself. Her method of arguing is as follows: "Well, I am sure, though I won't say that it was not wrong to do so or so, it was not more wrong in me than in Lady Jane, or Lady Mary, or Miss Louisa, and yet who finds fault with them? Are not they praised and admired by every

“one? Why should I pretend to be  
 “better than they are? I wish only  
 “I were half as good!”

This habit of justifying herself by the faults of others, has created in Miss Gloss a propensity to seek for the faults of which she is to make this convenient use. She seeks with a wish to find; and no sooner is this wish born than it gives birth to malignity. Never do you hear Miss Gloss speak of a generous or noble action performed by any one of her acquaintance. Never does she, of her own accord, acknowledge the superiority of one who is distinguished for talents, or admire another on account of her genius, or praise a third because of her goodness of heart; but in none does she fail to discern the petty blemish which serves her at once as a consolation and excuse for conscious inferiority.

You



You will consider Miss Gloss as a very detestable character: but in truth, my dear, she is no worse than the generality of what is termed *the world*. Her faults are the natural result of the absence of that principle which I have been so strenuously recommending. Had Miss Gloss kept it perpetually in remembrance that she was to be accountable to God for her own actions, accountable for the talents with which she was endowed, accountable for the opportunities of improvement which she possessed, and accountable for the dispositions she cherished in her heart, she would have examined herself by a less fallacious standard than the merits or demerits of those who fell within the limited sphere of her observation.

For one who is to mix with the world in an elevated situation in society, it becomes peculiarly requisite  
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to have the belief of being accountable to the supreme Lord and Governor of the universe fixed in the mind as a principle of action. Where it is not thus fixed, nor brought into constant use, the example of those high in rank, in power, or in honors, and the still more fatal example of the multitudes who offer incense to the possessors of these external advantages, will be considered as the sole criterion of right and wrong.

Those who look not beyond this world, must inevitably learn to judge of themselves as they think they are judged of by the world. They will estimate others by the same rule; and, while they see that depravity of heart, and even profligacy of manners, prevent not the world from offering adulation at the shrine of power, they will put a higher value on power than on virtue; and when they

they compare themselves with those who, notwithstanding essential blemishes, are thus courted and caressed, they will lay the comparison as an opiate to conscience.

In all situations in society, this species of self-delusion is too prevalent. All are too apt to think that there is in their particular case something that demands and obtains particular indulgence; but it is in the higher classes alone that this false sentiment has a chance of remaining uncombated; because to persons thus unfortunately situated truth does not present itself unsought for, as it frequently does in a less elevated sphere. To those who have been nurtured in false notions of their own inherent superiority, truth is, in general, but an unwelcome guest; and who, knowing it to be such, would dare to introduce it to the company of a superior?

Not

Not surely those who, from motives of vanity or self-interest, solicit that superior's favour !

Even those established laws of politeness which give to polished society its most fascinating charms, are, in this view, unfriendly to virtue. They teach friends to flatter ; and, by making it a principle never to speak any thing that is not agreeable, they prevent sincerity itself from speaking what is true.

You will from this observe, that when erroneous opinions have been formed by persons in the situations to which I allude, they have not the same chance of detecting their own errors, as persons whose observations on human character are exercised in a wider field. The very highest, are, in this respect, little less disadvantageously situated than the very lowest classes of society. The individuals

dividuals of each are confined to a narrow circle; but those who move in the higher have a peculiar disadvantage arising from this circumstance, viz. that narrow as their circle is, they cannot fail to observe how much it gives the tone to all that approach it. With such temptations from without and from within, what is there to preserve the pure integrity of virtue, but the perpetual consciousness of acting in the presence of "Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" Of Him, before whom all distinctions are annihilated, but those which shall endure for ever! Who has ordained to each state its peculiar advantages, its peculiar difficulties, and its peculiar dangers; and who from each individual will require a strict account of the talents with which he has been especially entrusted.

You

You, my dearest Lady Elizabeth, you who never turned a reluctant ear to the instructions of your friend, you who never bent an unwilling eye on the path of duty, will still with the same endearing docility enter into the spirit of the important doctrine now recommended to your attention. So when the Judge of all shall appear on the throne of his glory, ye likewise shall appear with joy; having, like the wise virgins in the parable, "kept your lamp trimmed, and your light burning," ever ready to attend the call of your Lord. Farewell.

Nov. 25, 1805.

## LETTER IV.

**T**HE belief of our being accountable to God for all our thoughts, words, and actions, naturally leads us to the consideration of the perpetual presence of the Deity ; a truth so inseparably connected with the former, that we cannot separate them even in idea.

“From the things that are made it evidently appears there is a God.” A truth so obvious, that we are apt to think it could not fail to be discovered by reason ; and that by reason the discovery was no sooner made than

than it began to connect with it the idea of retribution. Dark indeed, and very confused, were the notions which unassisted reason struck out upon both subjects; but to us, light from on high has sprung. Let us hail its radiant beams; and pursue with gladness of heart the path which our God has in mercy vouchsafed to illuminate.\*

A steadfast faith in the omniscience

\* This is by no means asserted from a belief that the human race was ever destitute of all light upon this subject from the source of revelation. It, on the contrary, appears extremely doubtful whether any of the truths of what is commonly termed natural religion would have ever been discovered by the human understanding without such assistance. The existence of a supreme First Cause, essentially wise and good, may therefore, with more propriety, be said to have been ascertained than discovered by human reason.

and



and omnipresence of the Deity, is the foundation of all religious worship: a truth to which all ages and all nations bear testimony. The belief of it is not confined to those only to whom the knowledge of salvation by our Saviour Jesus Christ has been granted; but, however disfigured by superstition, or obscured by ignorance, it pervades the human race.

You, indeed, perhaps have heard, or may hereafter chance to hear, of Atheists—men who pretend not to believe in the being or attributes of God: but, as I have no faculties to comprehend how any creature, endowed with reason, can doubt the evidence of all its faculties, I confess I have always remained doubtful with regard to the existence of such a species of non-belief. I wish it were no less difficult to understand why a firm belief in the being and attributes

attributes of God is attended with so little effect as it too frequently appears to be. You will, I am persuaded, anticipate my explanation of the cause, by reflecting on what I have already urged upon the difference between knowledge and active principle.

By those who have cast off the fear of God, and done wickedly, every recollection of the divine presence must be made in anguish of soul. It is to the innocent and upright alone that it opens a never-failing source of consolation and delight.

The support which a heart conscious of sincere integrity receives, from an assurance of its being seen by Him who will bring to judgment every secret thought, can perhaps be only truly appreciated by those who have seen their most meritorious ac-  
tions

tions misconstrued by the ignorance or malevolence of their fellow-creatures.

At all times, however, and in all seasons, the sublime idea of an ever-present God is fraught with hope and joy to such as seek his favour and protection. Let us pity the callous heart of him who could without emotion read the address of the Hebrew bard, in contemplating this elevating subject.

“ O Lord, thou hast searched me  
 “ and known me. Thou knowest my  
 “ down-sitting and mine up-rising;  
 “ thou understandest my thoughts  
 “ afar off. Thou compassest my path,  
 “ and art acquainted with all my  
 “ ways; for there is not a word in  
 “ my tongue, but lo! thou knowest  
 “ it altogether. Thou hast beset me  
 “ behind and before, and laid thine  
 “ hand upon me. Such knowledge is  
 “ too wonderful for me; I cannot  
 “ attain

"attain unto it. Whither shall I go  
 "from thy spirit? or whither shall I  
 "flee from thy presence? If I as-  
 "cend up into heaven, thou art  
 "there: if I make my bed in hell,  
 "thou art there. If I take the wings  
 "of the morning, and dwell in the  
 "uttermost parts of the sea, even  
 "there shall thy hand lead me, and  
 "thy right-hand shall hold me."

Delightful is the consciousness of  
 being thus upheld by almighty power,  
 and wrapt as it were in the arms  
 of omnipotence! When we cast  
 our eyes upon the wonders of crea-  
 tion, and behold in the heavens,  
 which are the work of his hands, the  
 innumerable worlds which are placed  
 near enough to be seen, and yet at  
 such immense distance as to be but  
 barely seen; when we learn the real  
 magnitude of any one of these stu-  
 pendous orbs, and compare it with  
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the seeming size, and reflect what an effort of human intellect it required to gain some feeble glimmerings of knowledge concerning the laws which guide it in its course, into what insignificance do we sink ! And yet, my beloved child, we are assured by Him, by whom all these worlds were called into existence, that our souls are precious in his sight ; and that though these worlds shall perish, our souls shall never perish, but that they shall be happy or miserable through all the ages of eternity.

God has not left it in our power to choose whether we shall exist or not. We may, by self-murder, change the state of our existence, and cut ourselves off from that chance of happiness, which, while there is opportunity of repentance, is allowed to even the worst of sinners ; but though we may destroy the body, we  
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cannot shorten the duration of the soul.

We can no more alter any of the laws which God has established for the government of the moral and intellectual world, by any imagination we may entertain concerning them, than we can alter the laws of the material world by our foolish fancies. Suppose a person, who likes to lie in bed all day, and takes special care to have all his windows well secured from the intrusion of any ray of light, should, while he rejoices in darkness, take it into his head to imagine that the sun had forgotten to rise, and was never again to shine upon the world, should we not think him very absurd? How much more so should we consider him if he proceeded to act upon this foolish supposition, and to order all his affairs as if the world was thenceforth to be involved in perpetual

perpetual night; and this on no better grounds than because he could not through his massy shutters see the sun!

And yet on no better foundation than this do thousands, and tens of thousands, order the affairs that are of the last importance to their eternal happiness. Loving to live in mental darkness, they foolishly encourage themselves in cherishing a belief that there is no light, and continue to persuade themselves, that since they think so, it must be so, till that awful period arrives, when the fabric of their dwelling is dissolved, and the unwelcome sun of truth bursts on their astonished souls!

Never, oh! never may any of the children so dear to my affections be in the number of this self-deluded multitude! May they never forget that God has endowed them with rea-

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sonable souls, and made them accountable for the use they make of the faculties he has bestowed; that he has made them capable of eternal happiness, and liable to incur the penalty of eternal pain. That he has placed this happiness and misery in their own immediate reach; but that while he has guarded them from the latter by the monitions of reason, the remonstrances of conscience, and the light of revelation, he has called them to the former by the most powerful impulses of nature; has made heaven and earth, all the works of creation and providence, instrumental to their instruction, and that he has promised the aids of divine grace to lead them to everlasting glory.

If the God who is ever-present with us, not only wills our happiness, but (to use the language suited to our present weakness) has taken in-  
finite



finite pains to secure it to us, does it not follow, that we are bound on our part to pursue that path towards it which he has pointed out? Now this path, though it is acknowledged to be narrow, is neither thorny nor intricate.

We must, if we desire to keep upon it, be vigilant. We must endeavour to attain a complete control over every passion which would lead us to transgress its bounds. We must teach self-will to relinquish its impetuosity, and self-love to unite itself in firm alliance with charity and benevolence. We may lay our accounts with having much to resist, and something to suffer; and we can neither suffer nor resist without the exertion of activity and fortitude. Activity and fortitude are therefore most necessary to our success: let us but exert them

them as we ought, and the obstacles which at first view appeared most formidable, will vanish and be forgotten !

Adieu.

Nov. 29, 1805.

## LETTER V.

I TRUST my dearest Lady Elizabeth is not yet so tired of the subject on which I entered in my last letter, as to be averse from renewing it. Did our living in the presence of God depend upon our own choice, and was the all-seeing eye of Deity to be withdrawn whenever we please to exclude it from our thoughts, then indeed the friend might be deemed impertinent who endeavoured to recall the unbidden guest. But as there cannot be a moment throughout the whole period of our existence, in which we can act unwitnessed by  
our

our Creator and our Judge, and as we are by him expressly told that "he that seeth in secret shall reward us openly," no means ought to be neglected or despised which can afford us any assistance towards establishing this important truth as a principle in our minds.

It is in the season of youth, while the heart is most alive to every generous impulse; and when nature, sensible of its weakness, teaches it to glow with gratitude for the protection of which it stands so much in need; that a habit of living in the presence of God can be most effectually established.

Very happy I am in the idea of having in some degree contributed towards laying a foundation for the establishment of this habitual consideration of the most important of truths in the minds of my young friends:

friends: nor, while I can thus flatter myself, shall I ever look back but with pleasure and satisfaction, to the hours we spent together in that retirement, which I purposely preferred to gayer scenes, in order to have it in my power to bestow on you an undivided attention.

It was there you first learned "to look through nature up to nature's God;" it was there you first began to read, in the wondrous fabric of the universe, the wisdom and the power of the great Creator: and, when you became sensible of the manifestations of his goodness, how did you rejoice in the consciousness that this great Creator, so full of wisdom and benevolence, is "the God in whom we live and move and have our being!" May this reflection be ever, as it then was, a subject of delight and gladness to your heart!  
and

and such you may be assured it ever will be, while you persevere in cultivating in yourself a disposition to keep it perpetually in remembrance.

Gratitude is one of the most delightful emotions of which we are susceptible. Not even a *conviction* of unworthiness in the person to whom we have in any instance been indebted for an act of kindness, can stifle the pleasure which accompanies every recollection of such circumstance in a truly generous mind. But when our gratitude ascends towards an object whom we perfectly love and cordially esteem, it is then a feeling of pure and unmixed delight; a feeling which elevates and harmonizes the soul, and inclines us to impart to others a share of the felicity which glows within our own bosoms.

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These are the joys which religion bestows on her sincere votaries.

But then—the religion of which I speak, is not a thing made up of shreds and patches. It is not a thing to be resumed at intervals, and to which you are only to devote the fag ends of your time. It is not to be considered as a science, in its nature separate and distinct from the conduct and concerns of life; but as the life of every duty, the animating principle of every action: it must dwell, not upon your lips, but *in your heart*.

I am aware that it is not thus that you will at all times hear it represented. People who are destitute either of capacity or inclination for examining the nature of that gracious covenant which God of his infinite mercy has promulged, when they recommend religion to you, will  
speak

speak of it as a matter of mere propriety and decorum, an accomplishment becoming your sex and age; while by others, still more foolish or more ignorant, an observation of its ceremonies may be enforced, from a belief that they will operate *as a charm* in keeping you from evil.

Into this sort of superstition I am persuaded you have too much good sense to be apt to fall. Never, indeed, can you fall into it, while you make a practice of reading the word of God with attention, and with a view to imbibe the spirit of the precepts it enforces and the doctrines which it unfolds. But though you may thus be preserved from erroneous notions concerning what religion is, and what it requires of you to be, still, I must repeat it, the most just opinions you can form will be of no further use than



than as they come to be habitually present to your mind.

Of all the doctrines of our holy faith, there is none more simple, more easy to be understood, or which presents itself to us in a manner so irresistible, as that of the presence of God ; and yet, where it has not been early impressed as a practical doctrine, how feeble is its influence in preserving us from the commission of sins !

In every prayer we offer up to the Almighty, we solemnly recognize the awful truth ; for, without a firm belief in the immediate presence of the Being to whom our prayers are addressed, we are guilty of profaneness in repeating them, inasmuch as in doing so we “ take the name of the Lord our God in vain.” Thus devotion, which should be found the most effectual means of improving our faith in the everlasting

everlasting presence of God, into an active and abiding principle, is converted into an engine of superstition. It not only ceases to be of any use, but, by creating a habit of self-delusion and of dissimulation, is positively injurious.

A subject which involves in its consequences of so very serious a nature, demands a little further attention. Let us then endeavour to find out the cause why people, sometimes even through life, go on repeating their prayers in this careless and reprehensible manner ; and then inquire how the fatal error may most effectually be avoided.

That children should, even from early infancy, be accustomed to begin and end the day with prayer, will not be disputed by any one who considers the force of habit, and observes how the return of any stated period serves  
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to recall the same trains of thought to which we have for any length of time been used regularly to devote it. On this account it becomes proper, even before children can form any adequate idea of the duty of prayer, to enforce its performance, and to teach them the *form* before they can acquire the *spirit* of devotion.

It however too often happens, that the habit, thus acquired, of repeating a certain set of words mechanically, at certain hours, is all that it is thought necessary to teach. The habit remains, perhaps, through life; but it remains as it was at first—mechanical. It produces no impression of the presence of God upon the mind: it excites no emotion of love, or of gratitude, or of veneration, in the heart, and consequently has no influence upon the conduct.

When people have been long accustomed

customed to slur over their devotions in this careless manner, and to cheat themselves into a belief, that by repeating a form of words they do all that is required in the performance of this momentous duty, the consequences which I have pointed out must inevitably follow ; for it must be very evident to your understanding, that if even at the moment when we solemnly invoke the Most High with our lips, no serious consideration of his immediate presence comes into our minds, there is little chance that amid the business or pleasures of life it will intrude upon our thoughts. "The fool says in his heart, there is no God ;" but to say that there is a God, and yet to live as if there were none ; to address him with the lips as if he were present, and yet never seriously to reflect whether he be really so, is folly, of a nature still

still more strange and unaccountable. ✕

A poet, with whose writings you will, I hope, be one day acquainted, in speaking on this subject, justly observes, that

“ Men may live fools, but fools they cannot  
“ die.” \*

True as this certainly is, it is no less true, that the wisdom which does not arrive till death begins to open the gates of eternity, arrives too late to be of use. To you, my dear child, may it come on the wings of life's early morn, and accompany you to its closing day; and may you never forget, that if in the fear of God wisdom has its beginning, it is in a continual sense of his presence that it has its best support.

\* Young.

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By what I have said, you will observe the fatal consequences of trusting in the efficacy of any mere outward forms of devotion, and be sensible of the disadvantage under which those must labour, who have never been led beyond the first mechanical rules, which are in fact of no other use than as a preliminary towards the formation of devotional habits.

By those who have never learned to lift their hearts to God, he may be addressed with punctual regularity through every stage of life, without producing any sense of his immediate presence on the mind. But never can it be thus with any of the beloved children to whom I now address myself. So easily were they impressed with love, and reverence, and gratitude, towards their great Creator, that piety seemed in them the spontaneous offspring of feeling.

The

The habit of looking up to God through all his works, and of considering him as the author and giver of every good, as it seemed of all other habits that which was with least difficulty acquired, so I trust it will of all others be found to have taken the deepest root. But, though planted in a congenial soil, it will not spring unless care be taken to cherish and improve it. That care, my dearest Lady Elizabeth, must now be yours. In aid of it, take all I now can offer—a few affectionate instructions.

In order to render prayer an effectual mean of establishing an abiding sense of the presence of Deity in your heart, I should earnestly recommend it to you, before you bow the knee to God, to ask yourself the following questions: “To whom am I going to address myself? Am

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“I about

"I about to speak to the great  
 "Creator of the universe! To Him  
 "whom angels and arch-angels wor-  
 "ship; who is from eternity to eter-  
 "nity unchangeably the same! To  
 "Him who knows every thought  
 "that passes through my heart, and  
 "has been the witness of all my  
 "actions! And how can I, weak,  
 "and ignorant, and sinful, as I am,  
 "hope to have my prayers accepted?  
 "I hope to have them accepted  
 "through the Lord Jesus Christ, my  
 "redeemer and mediator. He has  
 "commanded, he has taught me to  
 "pray; and through his merits and  
 "intercessions, will make my prayers  
 "acceptable at the throne of grace."

Some such reflections as these,  
 seriously made before you enter upon  
 the duty of prayer, will make the  
 regular performance of it the certain  
 means of keeping alive a sense of  
 the



the Divine Presence in your heart. Of other benefits to be derived from prayer, I shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter : I now confine myself solely to the consideration of its use as tending to impress our minds with such a conviction of the presence of God as cannot fail to influence our conduct. But this conviction must not only be sincere ; it must be constant. Though it returns with the morning dew, it must not like the morning dew evaporate with the heat of the mid-day sun.

In order to prevent this, a habit of looking up to God, as the disposer of every event in life, as the dispenser of every blessing, and as the immediate giver of every good, must be acquired and cherished. This is, in my opinion, the grand arcana of happiness. It enhances the value of every

every blessing, and alleviates the pain of every sorrow.

The truth of this may at present be best illustrated to you by a familiar example. When you are gratified by the possession of any object upon which you have set your heart, does not the idea of its having been bestowed as a mark of affection by a fond and indulgent parent, add to your gratification? Or, when you are disappointed in your wishes, but are at the same time convinced that the object was withheld from motives of affection, and with a view to procure for you a greater good than the accomplishment of your wishes could have bestowed, does not the conviction instantly disarm disappointment of its sting? If our confidence in the wisdom, love, and affection of a being subject to error can

can thus operate, how much more effectually must our confidence in the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father tend to rejoice or tranquillize our hearts ! One thing more I shall only mention.

As the works of nature tend much more than the works of art to raise our thoughts to heaven, I would earnestly recommend it to you to pursue the study, for which you appeared to have such a decided taste. Natural history, in all its branches, leads the mind to a perpetual admiration of the wisdom and power of the Supreme Being. Of its efficacy in producing habits of attention, I had many convincing proofs ; but had it answered no other purpose than to cherish in your mind those feelings that arise from contemplating the wisdom of God in his works, the time bestowed on it would  
not

not have been spent in vain. Happily, the hours thus devoted passed pleasantly as well as profitably ; nor did I ever observe that the glow of animation, which naturally arises from pursuing what is agreeable to the fancy, received the slightest check from connecting that pursuit with sentiments allied to the spirit of devotion.

May the search after truth, in all its forms, be ever attended with similar satisfaction ! May every pursuit into which you enter with avidity be not only innocent in its nature, but in some degree calculated to strengthen your faith, to invigorate your hope, and to keep you unspotted from the world !

Adieu.

Dec. 3, 1805.

## LETTER VI.

LET us, my dear young friend, before we proceed any farther in the examination of those principles on which we build our hopes of present peace and future happiness, cast a retrospective glance at the ground we have already passed.

A belief in the existence of the Supreme Being, I have considered as the first principle of all religion: truth and justice as the first principles of moral rectitude. I have endeavoured to impress upon your mind a distinct notion of the difference between  
knowledge

knowledge and principle, and shewn you, that our belief in God, as our present witness and our future judge, must be grafted in our hearts, so as to recur and operate with constant unremitting force, before it is to us as a principle.

With regard to our ideas of truth and justice, the case is exactly similar. We may entertain very just notions respecting both, and be perfectly well instructed concerning the obligations we are under to the practice of virtues which are so essential to the happiness of society, and notwithstanding all this instruction, be in our dealings neither *just* nor *true*. Depend upon it we shall be neither one nor other until truth and justice become habits of our minds, and by becoming such, are converted into active principles.

It would be absurd to perplex you  
with

with abstract definitions concerning the nature of these important principles; and to speak of their utility must be superfluous: but, supposing you perfectly well informed in regard to every thing that can be urged in favour of justice and of truth, I shall confine myself to such points as may most effectually tend to establish you in their practice.

To speak the truth at all times from the heart, appears at first view to be so easy and so natural, that we are inclined to wonder why it should not be always thus spoken. And so it would be spoken, were it not for the passions by which we are too often influenced.

There is not a passion in the human heart that does not in some degree tend to lead us astray from the simplicity of truth. Love blinds us to the faults and imperfections of its object,  
and

and so prevents us from seeing truth. Fear deters us from acknowledging it, and makes us even go over to the other side and take the part of falsehood. Hatred puts a thicker bandage on our eyes than love ; and spite, and envy, and malice, are all sworn foes of truth and justice. Pride, by enhancing our own merits, and exciting exaggerated notions of our own importance, leads us far astray from truth ; and self-love gives it such an artful colouring, that it is scarcely to be detected through the deep disguise.

Exposed as we are to the perpetual recurrence of some or other of these passions, how are we to preserve ourselves in a steady adherence to truth, so as never to depart from it, even when assailed by the strongest temptation ? I confess I know of no way which is to a certainty effectual, but  
that



that of living in a constant and unremitting consciousness of the presence of God. The desire of pleasing him will then be the predominant desire of our hearts; and this desire, when it becomes habitual, will, by destroying the power of the malignant passions, cut off the most formidable enemies which truth has to encounter. It will then be our first wish, with regard to those we love, that they should be beloved by God; and therefore, instead of dissembling their faults, we shall endeavour to amend them. Fear will then inlist on the side of truth; for how should we fear "those who can only kill the body," when impressed with an awful consciousness of standing in the presence of Him, "who can cast soul and body into fire everlasting."

Were our faith in the existence  
and

and presence of the Deity sufficiently strong, and our belief in a state of future retribution sufficiently accurate, it would be almost impossible for us in any instance to make a willing departure from truth. All the little arts of palliation and equivocation would then be held in deserved abhorrence. We should, in all we say, speak as those who "speak not unto men, but unto God;" who know that as he now sees us, we shall hereafter be seen by all.

A child who had been induced to tell lies through fear of punishment, would not (unless the habit were very inveterate indeed) tell a falsehood in which he was certain of being immediately detected. And what is the span of life! how short! how uncertain! How little is it worth our pains, for any paltry consideration, to dissemble what in a little—a *very little* while,

while, will stand revealed to men and angels !

The farther my acquaintance with the world extends, the more deeply am I confirmed in the opinion, that the principles of truth have no other solid basis than the fear of God. If I have ever been led to imagine that notions of honour and of self-respect would insure a strict adherence to truth and justice, I have been amply convinced of my error !

Honour, true and genuine honour, has indeed the spirit of truth and justice for its very essence. It is, when thus connected, immutable and inflexible in its decrees, obliging people to act in the privacy of retirement as they would act on the crowded theatre of public life ; giving to promises the force of law, and to confidence received, the bond of security. And does not the principles  
of

of religion do all this? Religion is therefore the basis of honour. Seriously, and from conviction, I can assure you, that the sense of honour, which has no other foundation than the opinion of the world, has neither strength nor substance. Before the impetuosity of the passions it melts like the snow-flake, which is now driven against my window by the southern wind!

Nor is an habitual sense of the presence of God less essential to the practice of justice, than I have shewn it to be essential to the practice of truth. Truth and justice are inseparably connected. They who love the one must cherish the other. They who despise the one must forsake the other also. The same passions which lead to a transgression of the one will lead to a transgression of the other: and the same principles

ples which preserve the integrity of the one, will fix a regard to the other in our hearts. So long as we permit pride, or self-love, or interest, or fear, or any other passion, to induce us to make exceptions with regard to the strict practice of either truth or justice, we deceive ourselves if we imagine that truth and justice are to us as principles. We, in that case, have in fact *no* principles. We are the mere slaves of present impulse, and live as the brutes which perish.

Justice, in its strictest sense, includes the strict performance of all the duties we owe to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves. If justice be in our hearts a principle of action, we will carefully inform ourselves of the nature and extent of these several duties, so that we may be found deficient in none : giving unto Caesar  
 e what

what is Cæsar's, and rendering unto God what is God's.

If God be indeed our creator, preserver, and bountiful benefactor, we owe him a debt of love, reverence, and gratitude, which it would be the highest injustice to withhold.

If we have been by any means informed that God has made to mankind any revelation concerning the divine nature and the divine will, and held forth in that revelation promises of eternal happiness upon certain conditions, we cannot refrain from diligent inquiry concerning the nature of these conditions, without being guilty of injustice to our own souls. Thus to inquire is therefore a duty which we owe jointly to God and to ourselves.

My expectations concerning you, my beloved child, lead me to hope that  
you

you will enter into this inquiry with eagerness : and to give you all the aid in my power, is the object to which the second part of this series of letters shall be devoted. In the mean time, let us observe how the first principles of religion, and the first principles of morality, aid and support each other, even in their simplest forms.

Justice demands of us, that we should do to others as we would be done by in the like case : that is to say, as we could not but acknowledge to be just if done to ourselves. If justice be fixed as a principle in our hearts, we will not permit pride to whisper any exceptions against this universal rule. We shall no more dare to deceive, or to injure, or to insult a person who is in rank or fortune our inferior, than we should dare to ensnare, deceive, injure, or

insult one whom fortune has placed upon her highest pinnacle, and armed with power to crush and to destroy us.

If the spirit of justice be in us, we shall ever be ready to support the cause of truth. I recommend this to your particular attention, because I have too much reason to believe, that it is a maxim which does not, in general, meet with the attention it deserves. Attachment to the party we espouse, or to the friends we love, or to the relations in whom we are (on any account) interested, seem, in some instances, to be deemed apology sufficient for departing from truth and perverting justice. Under this impression, people without scruple pronounce upon the cause which they know not. They without examining determine: they without hearing condemn.



condemn. The reputation which towers too high for them to destroy, they endeavour to undermine; and by hints, and shrugs, and whispers, insinuate the falsehoods, which, if openly brought forward, would be repelled with all the force of truth! People may, and I fear often really do flatter themselves that in acting thus, they act wisely; nay, if to screen a friend, or to support a party be the object they have in view, that they act virtuously! Such are the fatal delusions to which a deficiency of moral and religious principle, exposes the human mind!

I would not judge severely of any one. I would make every allowance for the exaggerations of partiality, and am willing to admit that it is extremely difficult to keep the judgment unbiassed by the prejudices of affection. But no fondness of affection,

no

no tenderness of friendship, can be admitted as a plea for violating the laws of charity, and outraging the principles of justice. Political expediency may, indeed, appear a sufficient apology in the eyes of the world, but we have no reason to believe that when we appear before the throne of God, it will then be accepted as an excuse for the breach of any positive commandment. "Whosoever loveth father or mother, or sister or brother, more than me," saith our Saviour, "is not worthy of me."

To preserve us from incurring the guilt of rash and erroneous judgments we have been expressly told, that "with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and that with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again." Nor are the consequences of having been by the

the force of prejudice betrayed into injustice, unfelt even in the present state.

The mind must be very callous indeed that is not wounded by the consciousness of having injured an innocent person by misrepresentations, even where no malice was intended. How much more so when conscious of having yielded to the impulse of groundless resentment, and of having been a prey to the rashness of credulity !—

You will find this beautifully illustrated in one of the eastern fables, where a man is represented as having left his sleeping child to the care of his faithful dog. On returning home he finds the cradle overturned, and the floor besmeared with blood, and, without waiting to examine, instantly kills the dog as the supposed murderer of his child. No sooner was the rash act

act committed, than lifting the cradle, he finds his child safe and well, and observes at the same time the mangled carcase of a serpent, which had been destroyed by the faithful animal, whose services he had, in the rashness of fury, requited with such deep ingratitude.

I could give you many instances of real and irremediable evils produced by acts of rash injustice. But even where the evils produced are of a less serious nature, they may deeply affect the happiness of our fellow creatures. It is therefore of infinite moment to acquire, in early life, such habits of justice and of truth, as may serve as a perpetual guard, not only against the more heinous breaches of their laws, but against those petty transgressions of them, which, though they do not alarm the conscience,  
are

are extremely injurious to the integrity of the moral character.

In order to this, you must accustom yourself to speak of the absent as if they were invisibly present; and to those who are present, to speak in no other way than you are conscious you will speak of them in absence. Thus shall truth and justice become habits of your mind, so fixed and settled there in the precious interval that is yet between you and the world, that when you launch upon its dangerous sea, you may not make shipwreck of your conscience.

At present you are happily exempt from many of the temptations to dissimulation and injustice by which you will hereafter be assailed; but if the principles by which these temptations are to be resisted, are not now formed, what is to save you

you from becoming their prey? Instead then of thinking how you will act in future untried scenes, be careful to regulate your conduct in the present; and instead of thinking yourself virtuous, because you have not been guilty of actions to which you had no temptation, make frequent and anxious inquiry of your own heart, how far you have, in thought, or word, or deed, offended against those principles of justice and integrity in which you have been amply instructed.

That the blessing of Him who is the God of truth may rest upon you, is the earnest prayer of your truly affectionate friend.

## LETTER VII.

ON casting my eye over my last letter, I am a little apprehensive that my dearest Lady Elizabeth may consider the principles it inculcates as somewhat too rigidly austere. "It is impossible," you will say, "to pay that strict regard to truth which I have enforced, without offending against politeness. We cannot shock people who are disagreeable " to

“to us, by telling them that they  
 “are so; nor can we tell people when  
 “they interrupt us by an unseason-  
 “able visit, that we wish they had  
 “staid at home.”

No, my dear, ~~we cannot~~ *in justice*  
 do either; for we have no right to  
 shock or to offend those who have  
 given us no moral cause of offence.  
 Nor do we sin against truth by re-  
 fraining, on such occasions, to express  
 our feelings. But if we *pretend* to  
 regard those for whom we have no  
 regard, to respect those for whom we  
 have no respect, and *gladly* to re-  
 ceive those whom we in reality are  
 vexed to see, we then sin against  
 truth and against our own souls.  
 Nor is this sort of simulation so ne-  
 cessary to those who live in the world  
 as it is generally supposed to be. I  
 could, even in your own family, point  
 out to you an honourable proof that  
 it



it is not; and that even in the common intercourse of society, sincerity need not be sacrificed in order to conciliate esteem. I could, on the contrary, produce the most satisfactory evidence to prove, that the simulation practised by vanity and selfishness, in order to deceive others into a belief that they are admired, or beloved, or esteemed, beyond what they really are, is the cause, not only of deeper, but of more frequent offence, than was ever given by an adherence to sincerity. The varnish of dissimulation, however artfully put on, cannot be always on; and when but for a moment laid aside, the features which it concealed are seen in even more than native deformity.

Let it then never for a moment be forgotten, that when you make professions of regard which you do not feel,

feel, you sin against God, against your neighbour, and against yourself. You sin against God, who is the witness of your dissimulation ; against your neighbour, who is the victim of it ; and against yourself, because, that by exciting hopes which you never meant to fulfil, you incur a debt which you cannot discharge without loss, or cancel without dishonour.

To cheat people of their gratitude and good will, is no less inconsistent with the principles of integrity, than to cheat them of their money : nay, it is in some respects worse, because it is a species of dishonesty which can only be practised with success on the unsuspecting and the upright.

It is no less foreign to the pure spirit of rectitude, to compliment those with whom we converse by an  
 apparent

apparent adoption of their prejudices. It may not be becoming or proper zealously to oppose them, but we may, without impropriety, be silent. Never, therefore, I beseech you, say what you think will be pleasing, in opposition to what you know to be true.

When you are called upon to speak on any past transaction, speak the truth openly, and candidly, and without reserve. Let neither fear, nor love, nor any other passion or affection of your heart, prevent you from doing justice, by inducing you to give any turn or colouring to suit the purpose of the present moment. Whenever the moral character of any human being is concerned, the principles of justice will teach us to speak in the same manner in which we should have spoken, if the recording angel stood visibly before us, transcribing

scribing every word we utter into the register of heaven.

Justice obliges us to be very careful of even remotely injuring others ; and still more strictly does it bind us never by fraud or malice to deprive them of their possessions. Now though there is no possession so precious, there is none held upon so delicate a tenure, as character. I do not speak of character only with regard to what are deemed essentials in the reputation of either man or woman ; but I speak of character as made up of separate qualities, which, taken in the aggregate, convey a general idea, which is either favourable or unfavourable according to the nature of the qualities supposed to preponderate. It is upon this impression of their general character that the influence of every human being chiefly, nay, almost entirely, depends.

depends. To endeavour to lessen and degrade any person, upon the grounds of an unjust and ill-founded prejudice, is therefore to deprive them of a portion of their just influence; and if we are conscious that that influence would be virtuously exerted, we become answerable to God for the consequences.

Hence arises the more than impropriety of making such reports of insulated facts; or of expressions casually dropped in the unsuspecting carelessness of confidential intercourse, as may make an impression injurious to the character. Hence, too, arises the gross injustice of reporting an expression drawn forth in the heat of argument; or a sentiment sported in jest, as if they were serious and decisive indications of the dispositions, and opinions, and principles,

ples, of the person who uttered them.

To explain how unjust this would be, take the following instance. Suppose that in the midst of one of your sportive sallies, your papa had turned to me, with a smile, and said, "what a little fool this is!" and that I, treasuring up the expression, should now go about gravely and tell my friends, "that Lord —— "thought his daughter a fool, and "that he had told me so;" in what light would you consider my conduct? And yet it is thus, in a thousand instances, that words are, in reporting them, so far perverted from their real meaning, as to serve the purposes of falsehood. Let it, then, through the whole course of your life, be a rule to you, to be no less careful of giving a false impression, than of uttering direct and notorious untruths.

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Those who speak without reflection, and who are incapable of generalising their ideas, or of taking in the whole of any subject, if they have not had their minds deeply imbued with a sense of justice, may be said to do nothing else than tell lies through life. And since there are too many who thus lightly speak, it becomes due to justice, not only to be careful of what impressions we give, but to be careful of what impressions we receive.

A pure and candid mind will always be more ready to believe, and more pleased to report, good than evil. But there is a spurious candour which annihilates all moral distinctions between good and evil; and against this I would zealously warn you. A bad and a vicious action, is a bad and vicious action,

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let

let the person who performed it be what and who they will. No eminence of station, no charm of manners, no personal graces, no engaging qualities, can make that right which is in its nature essentially wrong. If the friend whom we most dearly love sins against the laws of God and man, we must, in our hearts, pronounce the action sinful. But if we judge our own hearts, and have a proper sense of our own weakness, grief, untinged by the arrogance of pride, or the malignity of contempt, will accompany the sentence. We can have no pleasure in dwelling upon the faults of the most faulty; but we must not pronounce the faulty faultless.

Occasions may, in the course of life occur, when, in justice to the innocent, and in order to protect them,



them, we may find ourselves obliged to expose the guilty. But happily such occasions do not often occur; and though, when they do, it becomes our duty, even at the risk of every personal evil, to act according to the dictates of conscience, we ought, even in such instances, to go *not one single step beyond what is absolutely necessary*. The evil which we can do no good by revealing, we are not called upon to reveal. We must not, indeed, pretend to approve where we disapprove, especially where we *highly* and *seriously* disapprove; but, unless where a higher duty interposes, we may and ought (except to the parties concerned) to be silent. Nor if we be once determined what line of conduct we ought to pursue, should we suffer ourselves to be diverted from that line of conduct by any offence committed directly against

against ourselves. This would be to act from the dictates of resentment, not from the principles of justice.

It may appear to require no small degree of magnanimity and forbearance to act as I have advised; but it in reality requires nothing more than a firm, a settled, and an ever-active belief in the presence and providence of God, and a future judgment. With this conviction upon our minds, we shall be more anxious to approve ourselves to God, than to be approved of man; and consequently be more solicitous concerning the motives than concerning the consequences of our conduct.

The strongest symptom of innate depravity which I have ever been able to detect in the human mind, is found in the so general propensity to believe ill, upon slight grounds,  
of

of those with whom we are only slightly, or perhaps not at all acquainted. You know with what earnestness I have always endeavoured to combat this propensity, wherever we have observed it. It will always be found strongest in the worst furnished minds. The consciousness of worthlessness which haunts the idle and the ignorant, is a sensation of so unpleasant a nature, that one cannot wonder they should eagerly seek to get rid of it, by turning their minds to the faults of others. But why should people, who have in them the consciousness of any worth, be so apt to believe that others are less worthy than themselves? I must, I am afraid, confess, that it can, in some instances, be no otherwise accounted for, than from a supposition of latent pride, envy, or malevolence. Sometimes, however, I have traced  
this

this propensity to a source different from either of these, and seen it evidently the effect of habit; habit contracted even in the simplicity of childhood, from those with whom the first years of life were spent.

From whatever source it proceeds, a propensity to think ill of others must present a formidable obstacle to the cultivation of the principles of justice. Guard therefore, my love, I beseech you, guard against the admission of this propensity, as you value the peace and purity of your own bosom. By contemplating what is noble, and generous, and good, in human character, you will acquire a taste and an esteem for virtue. By the practice of virtue, your esteem of it will be confirmed; the principles of justice will extend this esteem to all who, in the general tenor of their lives, have shewn themselves

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the friends of virtue. Against such you will not be apt hastily to imbibe a prejudice from the passing current of idle rumour, or the whispered misrepresentations of wilful malice. You will here, as on every other occasion, be careful to do as you would be done by.

I am aware that it will by many persons be expected that I should take some pains to warn you against the hasty reception of a too favourable impression of the hearts and dispositions of those with whom you have not had a long and intimate acquaintance. But though I cannot deny that a tendency to view human nature on its brightest side, may occasionally be productive of no small degree of mortification and disappointment; I believe that, upon the whole, it produces, to every individual

dual who cherishes it, a much greater portion of pleasure than of pain. It certainly produces a much greater portion of benevolence; and all the benevolent sensations are attended with pleasure; all the malevolent with pain. Taking in, therefore, the whole of life, it is much better to be exposed to the pain of occasional disappointments, than to the pain of everlasting suspicion. And when, after such disappointments, one can retire into their own hearts, and read there an apology for their credulity, they may be something the wiser, but they will not be much the worse, for all that it has made them suffer.

I shall now only mention one other advantage to be derived from cultivating the principles of justice, in connection with the principles of religion, viz. that it obliges us to make  
 a proper

a proper and conscientious use of the influence we possess, from whatever source it may arise.

Influence is of various kinds. There is scarcely a human being so low, so destitute, as not to possess influence of some species, or in some degree.

Children soon learn to know and to appreciate their influence. The darling boy, who obtained such a share of my affections was perfectly conscious of the influence he possessed. An infant of the same age, endowed with equal warmth of heart, but not sensible of having any influence, might have pitied the blind beggar, whom he heard in the fields so bitterly complain of thirst, and might have wished to relieve him,—but he would not have burst through the hedge, and seized the old man's hand, and eagerly bid him come with him to where he should have drink and  
meat,

meat, and money to buy more for to-morrow. Blessed instance of the first ideas of influence being connected with the genial impulses of benevolence! Never, oh! never may the precious union be dissolved!

Birth, fortune, rank, talents, and virtue, have each a particular species of influence; but when they at any time happen to be united, the influence belonging separately to each is increased to an incalculable degree. Such persons are to society, not only the brightest ornament, but the most inestimable blessing. Their influence, like that of the sun, extends not merely to the surface; it penetrates into the dark and hidden places of the earth, diffusing energy and animation far beyond the situations on which it apparently shines.

As nothing can be more fatal than any degree of doubt with regard to  
the



the reality of virtue, instances of pure, and disinterested, and exalted virtue, especially when they occur where temptations are known to abound, are highly and universally salutary. The more intimately we are acquainted with such characters, the higher will be our conception of their real worth, and, consequently, the greater the influence of their example.

For my own share, I confess that the happiness of numbering among my friends, my steady and affectionate friends, some of those in whom all the combined sources of influence have conspicuously united, has had the most beneficial consequences upon my mind. It has proved to me, that the consciousness of high descent, and elevated rank, and splendid fortune, does not necessarily give birth to pride : no, not even where,  
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in addition to these advantages, nature has bestowed the most transcendent talents, and the charm of every personal attraction ! It has proved that when the principles of religion, truth, justice, honour, and integrity, have been early and deeply implanted in the heart, they will, in every situation, expel from it every impulse that is adverse to benevolence. -

It is in such examples as these, that we behold the omnipotence of virtue. It is only where power enlarges the sphere of influence that it can be conspicuously displayed. But, alas ! how seldom is it thus displayed ! Nor can we wonder that it should be seldom, when we consider what little pains are taken to impress the mind with a proper sense of duty. Were the importance of the principles which I endeavour to inculcate, as seriously attended

attended to as they deserve, the assemblage of virtues which I have described, would, I am fully convinced, be more frequent than even the most sanguine can now suppose it to be. The influence of rank and fortune would then be exerted for other purposes than merely to promote the gratification of pride, or vanity, or selfishness. Nor would the consciousness of possessing influence, from whatever source, confer any elation of spirits, but in proportion as it was accompanied with the consciousness of employing it meritoriously.

Be it your care, then, my dearest Lady Elizabeth, to acquire betimes that steadiness of principle, which, as your influence extends, may not only give it stability and permanence, but may ensure to it a great and everlasting reward.

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In order to this, you must begin even now to consider whatever species of influence you imagine yourself possessed of, in the light of a talent bestowed by God, for the improvement of which you are to be strictly accountable. I know from experience how considerable is the influence which you already have obtained over the hearts of those to whom you have endeared yourself.

It is the sweet influence of affection, and will be most assuredly maintained by constantly exercising it in the cause of benevolence : not the benevolence of weakness or caprice, but the benevolence which accords with the genuine principles of truth and justice.

Let neither timidity nor selfishness prevent you, upon any occasion, from thus exerting it. In judging between your brothers, or your sisters,  
or

to the companions with whom you associate, consider yourself bound to divest yourself of every degree of partiality; and wherever you are conscious of any particular favour or affection, take care never to speak upon the subject of controversy, until you have in your mind reversed the persons of the parties.

I trust you will never forget, that the extraordinary degree of influence which you now possess over the minds of your brothers and sisters, may be to them and to yourself an everlasting blessing; and that if you properly employ it, it will undoubtedly be thus to both. But it may also prove the reverse of a blessing both to them and you. It will prove the one or the other, according as you are yourself influenced by the principles which, I so earnestly desire to have fixed in your heart. If the power which

which you have over them be employed to increase their happiness and virtue, your own virtue and your own happiness will be infallibly augmented and secured. Piety, truth, justice, and benevolence, will thus, by constant practice, become the fixed and permanent habits of your mind; so that, when the sphere of your influence extends, you may enter upon it in the full assurance of hope, determined so to employ every talent entrusted to your care, as to obtain the recompense of reward.

I must not omit observing, that there is a considerable influence attached to personal charms and accomplishments. This influence is, however, in general exaggerated far beyond the truth. But to whatever degree it extends, those who possess it are no less accountable for the use they make of it, than for the use  
which

which they make of talents or fortune. Instead of serving as an apology for the extravagances of folly, and the waywardness of caprice, it ought to be considered as an obligation to the practice of more than common prudence and decorum. The influence of beauty ought to be exerted in discountenancing levity, and giving additional weight to the dictates of wisdom and virtue. Its short reign ought to be spent in such a way as may ensure peace and satisfaction to the long period of life which may succeed its termination. But never forget that the influence which depends *solely* upon personal attractions, will, when personal attractions fail, be relinquished with anguish : and that in proportion as it was prized beyond its value, its loss will be deplored, becoming to the un-

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furnished mind a source of real misery, and of ever-gnawing discontent.

For the influence of talents we must likewise consider ourselves as strictly accountable.

Every intellectual endowment is a trust, for the employment of which we are to be responsible at the day of judgment. We are therefore bound so to employ our faculties, as appears likely to produce the greatest degree of happiness.

Neither the principles of religion nor justice permit us to employ our talents in the gratification of vanity, or pride, or any selfish passion ; far less do they sanction our exerting them as instruments of revenge or of malignity. That we may innocently employ them in the cause of self-defence cannot be denied ; but it is so difficult to draw the line, so difficult  
to



to determine where self-defence ends, and positive offence begins, that I am firmly persuaded it is better and safer to suffer wrong for a time, than to be over-anxious in our own justification.

Nor will the principles of justice permit us to enter the lists with an adversary of very inferior strength. Imbecility, rashness, and folly, though they neither palliate the atrocity of vice, nor excuse the malignity of deceit and falsehood, ought to excite so much pity for the offender as to restrain resentment. To employ our talents in exposing those who will so certainly expose themselves, would be equally superfluous and unjust.

If this argument be well-founded, it will lead to an unqualified disapprobation of all personal satire. Satire may with justice and propriety be  
employed

employed against sophistry and error, but never can it be employed against any individual with safety: never, indeed, is it so employed, that its darts are not dipped in malice. The influence of talents ought to be exerted for other purposes, than to obtain to ourselves the glory of a paltry triumph: and paltry and insignificant is every triumph, but those which we may contemplate with delight at the hour of death and in the day of judgment.

From what I have now said, you will perceive how often the practice of self-denial is enforced by the principles of justice. You will therefore learn betimes to submit to this necessary discipline of the will, so as to obtain a complete control, not only over the violent, but over the insidious passions. In order fully to accomplish this, you shall be furnished with

with still more powerful motives than any that have been yet advanced. But as I am extremely anxious that the first principles of religion and the first principles of morality should be deeply rooted in your heart, I shall, before we proceed to deeper themes, devote some letters to the illustration of what I have already stated.

The persuasion I cherish, that truth, in whatever form it comes, will have a ready access to your mind, is the only thing which could at present animate me to the prosecution of such a task. In the fullness of hope and of affection, I now subscribe myself, my dearest Lady Elizabeth's sincerest friend.

## LETTER VIII



*My dear Lady Elizabeth,*

If we would have the barriers which we erect to guard us from the encroachments of vice, so powerful as effectually to repel the adversary, we must take care to erect them on a solid foundation. We must likewise take care to fix them precisely in the proper place. But how, you may ask, are we to discover this? How are we exactly to ascertain the boundaries of vice and virtue? Are they not often fixed by opinion; and altered

tered by fashion; and modelled by situation? Is it not sufficient that we be always amiable, and that we never mean any ill; and that we make it a rule to do as others do, and just to take the world as we find it?

This indeed, my love, is not likely to be said by you, but it is the language of thousands. I shall now no farther observe upon it than to say, that they who thus profess only to please the world, must only look to the world for their reward. Beyond this world they need not look; for they have no right to entertain any farther hope. Every servant works for his own master; and from the master for whom he works he must receive his wages.

The precise boundaries between right and wrong, vice and virtue, require, it must be confessed, some accuracy of observation, some diligence  
of

of research ; but if we believe that God—the omniscient and omnipotent God, is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, we shall be diligent, and take every means of informing ourselves upon a point of so much importance.

I am far from being one of those who feel it a pleasure and consider it a virtue to rail at the world ; but I think it my duty to examine the grounds of the world's approbation. Now it does not appear that the world has any business to enquire whether the qualities that render us useful or agreeable to it be genuine or otherwise. Neither is their real value of any importance to the world, so that they answer the purposes of general intercourse :—to be pleasing in our manners, and so decorous in our conduct as to abstain from all appearance of evil, are, with regard to the world,

world, the only essential requisites. A strict adherence to moral and religious principle, does not necessarily make us at variance with the world, but it makes all the little arts of pleasing it appear contemptible; and obliges us to judge of the merit of our own conduct by a very different standard than the seeming approbation of that floating mass of idleness, impertinence, and vanity which in certain society is called *the world* !

If we heartily desire to be approved by God, our principles will lead us to be so careful of approaching the confines of vice, that we shall even watch our virtues with a jealous eye, lest they betray us into casual or habitual transgression. And, believe me, my love, this is no superfluous degree of circumspection. In our present imperfect state, our best qualities, unless directed by the firmness of principle,

principle, may betray us into the most fatal snares ; and without the exertion of vigilance and fortitude, the firmness of principle will never be obtained. Let then no sophistry persuade you that qualities so absolutely necessary to the preservation of your principles, can ever render you less truly amiable and engaging. If you always act as under the eye of God, they will be exerted naturally and without effort, and never beyond what the occasion calls for. You will then be diffident where diffidence is becoming ; that is to say, upon all subjects on which others may be better informed than yourself ; but you will be firm in the performance of duty. The value of the mild and gentle temper which nature has bestowed upon you, will thus be enhanced rather than diminished, as it will give to the fortitude you evince in the cause of



of truth, a double lustre. The fatal consequences attending the want of the fortitude and vigilance which I have recommended, I shall now, according to my promise, exemplify, in such a manner as I hope may at once give some relief to the powers of attention, and tend to imprint the doctrines illustrated upon your heart.

I shall not, indeed, promise to tell my story with the same spirit as when surrounded by the charming groupe of happy faces whose sparkling eyes used, in expectation of the promised tale, to fix on mine with such avidity of delight : nor shall I be, as then, rewarded by the endearing caress, the kiss of gratitude and love. But as I shall hear nothing to the contrary, I may still flatter myself that the story which I am now to relate, may produce the request so often and so sweetly

sweetly urged, "pray, pray tell us  
"more." Let us, then, proceed to

*The Story of the tame Pigeon.*

Some years before you were born, a deep and universal regret was excited by the premature death of the Earl of N. a nobleman who had the rare felicity of being very sincerely and very deservedly beloved. An eulogium upon his character given in one of the newspapers of the day concludes as follows: "His lordship is  
"succeeded in his titles and estates  
"by his only son, now in the third  
"year of his age. The present earl  
"and his sister, who is in her sixth  
"year, are left to the sole guardianship of their amiable mother, a lady  
"no less distinguished by exemplary  
"virtue, than by her exquisite beauty,  
"splendid

“splendid fortune, and brilliant accomplishments.”

This account of Lady N. was by no means exaggerated. She had hitherto performed all the duties of life in an exemplary manner. She had been an amiable daughter, a good wife, and a fond mother—but she had been neither one nor other from principle. She had only acted the part planned for her by others, and quietly gone on in the track into which she had fortunately been led.

For the sweetness with which she accommodated herself to the inclinations of her parents, and her husband, Lady N. had obtained much applause, and would have merited more than all the praise bestowed, had her obedience proceeded from a principle of duty ; but it was in her the offspring of indolence and timidity. She yielded, not to gratify others, but to save trouble

trouble to herself. She consequently never had experienced the pleasure which glows in the breasts of the generous when conscious of having made a sacrifice of inclination to duty or affection.

Having been successfully guided by the wisdom of judicious parents, and of a sensible husband, Lady N. had always appeared to act with uncommon prudence; but when left solely dependent upon her own judgment, she found that she had been very imprudent in never having given herself the habit of exerting it. She had had what is sometimes called a religious education :—that is to say, she had learned a respect for the institutions of the church, had learned to repeat her creed, and say her prayers, and to keep clear of all gross offences. But even these best impressions were rather adopted as prejudices, than embraced

embraced as principles. In the formation of principles, the heart and the understanding unite; the adoption of prejudices is the work of the feelings and the imagination.

It has been observed of women, by a witty poet, (though in fact the observation is equally applicable to both sexes,) that

They who are born to be controll'd,  
Stoop to the forward and the bold.

Indeed, in the very nature of things, they who must be governed will fall under the dominion of the worthless; for who but the self-interested and depraved will practise the arts necessary to obtain an ascendancy over the mind either of an equal or superior?

Those who do not select from esteem, or esteem from real and accurate

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curate observation, will be for ever liable to misplace their confidence. Such was the fate of Lady N. Her too great facility of temper rendered her an easy prey to the arts of the designing. Her principles were good; but they were not fixed in her mind with sufficient strength to be resorted to as the support and guide of her life. She thought it requisite for her to have some one on whom to lean, and indolently resigned herself to the first to whom chance happened to direct her.

Mrs. Pegg, the person who, after the death of the Earl of N. had the boldness to aspire and to gain her lady's confidence, was a woman of very low origin, but of very insinuating address. By pretending a more profound degree of sorrow for the death of her late master than was at all consistent with probability, she  
made

made her first approaches to her lady's favour. The grief of Lady N. was unaffected and sincere. She was soothed by the apparent sympathy of the hypocrite, whose tears flowed still faster than her own, and considered them as an infallible proof of the strength of her attachment.

Lady N. was not deficient in understanding; but Mrs. Pegg was as much her superior in talents as in artifice. Had her talents been guided by principle, she would indeed have been a valuable acquisition in any family; but her heart was corrupt and depraved: her talents were therefore employed to cheat, to circumvent, and to deceive. She soon penetrated into all the weaknesses of her lady's character, and with infinite dexterity turned them to her own advantage. Every thing at Castle N. was now placed under the control

of this ambitious woman. So complete was the ascendancy she obtained over the mind of her too easy mistress, that she neither heard, saw, examined, nor judged, for herself. Every thing was left to Mrs. Pegg. All the servants, even the old and attached domestics of the family; were, one after another, on various pretexts, dismissed. Some Mrs. Pegg thought it dangerous to keep, because they knew too much of her real character; others were too unbending to be subservient to her wicked views: she therefore made use of the opportunity which constant access to her lady afforded, to prejudice her mind against them all.

Never, indeed, did Mrs. Pegg make use of her influence for the advantage of any human being. Never did she commend any one to her lady's favour on account of their  
real



real worth; or seek to lessen any one in her regard on account of any blemish in their moral character: all her motives were purely selfish. But if Lady N. had been possessed of the principles of justice, she would not have taken this woman's representations as sufficient evidence, neither would she have delegated to a mean and vulgar person that authority, for the due exercise of which, she was to be responsible at the tribunal of the Almighty.

The dread of giving herself trouble, would not then have appeared to her as a sufficient excuse for shrinking from those inquiries by which the truth would have been established; nor would she have considered herself justifiable in giving up her own judgment, where she was called upon by Providence to exercise it.

With respect to her children,  
Lady

Lady N. was still more seriously to blame. She doated upon them to excess. Yet she did not give herself any trouble in the formation of their minds. She trusted every thing to Mrs. Pegg. "What could she do?" she said; "she never had been used to children, and did not know how to manage them: but happily Mrs. Pegg had been used to them, and therefore could not fail to manage them properly!"

Their first notions of right and wrong were consequently imbibed from Mrs. Pegg. Now it happened, that of right and wrong Mrs. Pegg had no other rule or standard than self-interest. Whatever gave her trouble was punished as a fault of the first magnitude. Whatever did not interfere with her ease or convenience was passed without notice. No idea of the consequences which false and injurious

injurious impressions might have upon the future character, entered into her imagination; nor, if it had, would it have disturbed her peace. The children might be false, cruel, capricious, proud, or obstinate, with impunity, provided they paid a proper respect to her, and never failed to observe her special orders; but no sooner did they transgress in this respect, than they were punished with unmerciful severity; and so completely did she keep the poor infants under subjection, that they dared not utter a complaint.

The children believed that their mamma's apartments were haunted by a secret spy; and in truth they were so; for the unprincipled nurse, not contented with the possession of her lady's unbounded confidence, took care, by means of listening, to inform herself of all that was going forward.

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And such an adept had she become in this detestable practice, that a two-inch door was no obstacle in the way of her information. When she had, from any thing that passed, the slightest grounds for alarm respecting the continuance of her influence, she had immediate recourse to a method which she had ever found to be infallible. Lord N. or Lady Mary were, upon such occasions, the innocent sufferers.

As they were the objects of their mother's doting fondness, their slightest indisposition engrossed her whole attention; and upon such occasions her sole dependance was placed on the care, the skill, the wonderful management of Mrs. Pegg. No wonder, then, that Mrs. Pegg should be sometimes induced to make to herself an opportunity of evincing her skill and dexterity in their recovery; and

as

as she could do it at the expense of a little stomach sickness, the children were, perhaps, in reality, not much the worse for the experiment.

Mrs. Pegg was not, however, always thus fortunate in being able speedily to remove the effects of her own treatment. When her young lord was in his fifth year, he was seized with an inflammation in his lungs, which had nearly cut short the slender thread of his existence. It is impossible to describe the confusion and dismay which reigned at Castle N. during the anxious period of his danger. No eye (at least so Lady N. believed) ever shut in sleep; no lips were opened for any other purpose but to sigh. How much the usual consumption of victuals was lessened, is best known to the housekeeper; but certain it is, that among the numerous

merous train of domestics and dependants at Castle N. there were few who did not on this occasion feel deeply interested for their lady, or—for their young lord, or—for themselves!

We may believe that Mrs. Pegg would now act the part of grief to admiration. She indeed appeared to be almost distracted; but she did not now act a part: her terrors were, for the first time, sincere. For, though her soul was of too hard a texture to be susceptible of the tenderness of affection, the fond mother herself was not now more truly anxious for her son's recovery than she was. Her attention was not however solely engrossed by the little sufferer. Lady Mary never experienced from Mrs. Pegg so much tenderness of endearment, or such unlimited indulgence as she now experienced. She was only entreated not  
to

to speak of her brother to her mamma; and she might have what she pleased.

Mrs. Pegg gave herself, in this instance, a great deal of unnecessary trouble. The poor child's spirits had been too effectually subdued by terror to betray any transaction which it was Mrs. Pegg's interest to conceal: nor did it, perhaps, enter into her mind to ascribe her brother's illness to any other cause than that to which she had heard it ascribed; viz. running across the lawn without his hat. But though Lady Mary might not know, or might not chuse to tell, I know, and I shall tell you how it really happened.

Mrs. Pegg's standard of right and wrong has already been explained. Now as the children could do nothing which produced so much trouble to her as soiling or tearing their clothes, so no fault of which they were ever guilty,

guilty, was punished with half the severity. Lady Mary, being of a timid and quiet disposition, was not nearly so apt to transgress in this way as her brother, who, while he was in frocks, was perpetually grieving Mrs. Pegg's righteous spirit by stains, and rents, most unfeelingly inflicted on her future perquisite. Nor when he exchanged the fragile muslin for the stouter trowsers, were her troubles at an end. Though he could no longer tear, he still could soil ; and in those elopements into the garden or court-yard, which not all her vigilance could prevent, he would sometimes in running after a butterfly slip his foot on the fresh dug mould, sometimes in caressing a spaniel receive such a warm return of gratitude as left its visible effects behind ; nor did he think of the consequences, until he beheld the marks of his favourite's



avourite's paws upon the fair nankeen, which he would then most willingly have exchanged for the coarsest linsay-woolsey that ever little boy was clothed in.

It happened on a luckless day, when, as Lady N. dined from home, Mrs. Pegg intended saving herself the trouble of dressing the children a second time, that Lord N. finding himself unobserved, and hearing the voice of Tom the stable-boy speaking to his tame pigeon, was tempted to slip down the back stairs to share with Tom the pleasure of feeding his Pet.

The pigeon was at first a little shy. It flew away at his approach, but being lured back by Tom, it at length became so familiar as to eat the corn which he scattered for it at his feet. Tom assured him that when a little better acquainted, it would eat from his hand with as little fear as it now did

did from his. Lord N. was very ambitious to rival Tom in the pigeon's favour, but in the eagerness of impetuosity he defeated his own purpose. The pigeon took fright and retreated. He pursued. Snatching the hat full of corn from Tom's hand, he followed the fugitive, coaxing it in such sweet accents as but one other little boy in the wide world could utter. The hard-hearted pigeon heeded not the music of his voice. It walked on till, turning into an inner court, it there took to its wings and flew to the top of the opposite wall. Poor N. rushed on unconscious of his danger, nor once perceived the heap of mud which had been that morning raked from a sewer, and lay directly in his way, and in which he would, the next moment, have measured all his length, had it not been for the agility of his companion, who, throwing himself before him, saved

saved him from falling farther than his knees. As he was not hurt, he would have joined Tom in the loud laugh which he instantly set up, had not the idea of Mrs. Pegg presented itself to his affrighted imagination, banishing all thoughts of mirth and gladness from his mind. As he looked in sad dismay on the woefully bespattered trowsers, the roses forsook his cheeks, the ruby lips grew pale, and the long dark silken fringes with which nature had adorned his seraph eyes, were moistened with the tears of anguish. He stood aghast and trembling; afraid to cry, lest his crying should reach the ears of Mrs. Pegg, and yet not able to refrain from giving vent to the misery which swelled his little heart. At length he took courage to turn his steps towards the house, supported by Tom, who was now little less terrified than himself, though he knew

knew not for what ; when, all at once the sound of Mrs. Pegg's voice broke in thunder on his ears, and her stately form was seen advancing towards them, clothed in all the majesty of anger. Lord N. now screamed outright ; but unmindful of his emotion she took him by the arm with one of those jerks which prove that dislocation is not so easily accomplished as some weak persons may imagine ; and giving Tom a box on the ear which sent him staggering to the other side of the court, hastily proceeded with the culprit to her own apartment. How she stamped and raged, and scolded, it is needless to describe, but as she had stamped and raged, and scolded at offences of the same kind before now, and as it proved without effect, she determined on a new method of punishment. Having stripped the unfortunate delinquent of

of his soiled garments, she put him in a corner, there to stand during the term of her pleasure, and then calmly left him, in order to resume the occupation in which she had been so disagreeably interrupted.

It was in the month of May. The sun was hot, but the east wind blew chill. The poor boy had thrown himself into a heat running after the pigeon, which had been increased by succeeding agitation, and from wearing coat and trousers lined with flannel, he was now exposed, without defence, to the piercing air of an open window. The consequences are not so surprising as his recovery appeared to be to those best acquainted with his danger.

These consequences it is certain Mrs. Pegg did not foresee, but she made no scruple of doing under the eye of God, what she would not have done under

under the eye of her mistress. And that she was conscious of doing wrong was evident from the rage she was in on finding that the situation in which she had left Lord N. was discovered by little Tom ; who, deeply interested in the fate of his young master, and directed by his lamentations to the scene of punishment, had adventurously dared, by the assistance of a step-ladder, to peep in at the window, through which he hastily offered all the consolation in his power, by assuring Lord N. that the pigeon should be his own.

## LETTER IX.

WHEN Lord N. was well enough to be taken out an airing, he went one morning with his mamma and sister, attended by Mrs. Pegg, in the landau, and was standing up by his mamma's side looking over the carriage, when it stopped so suddenly as to throw him off his balance, with a violence that might have been fatal, had not Mrs. Pegg's arm been ready to receive him.

The coachman at the same moment called loudly to some one to get out of the way. "No," replied the per-

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son spoken to, "I will not get out of  
"the way. You may ride over me  
"you may trample me to death—but  
"I will not stir till my lady promises  
"to speak to me."

Lady N. stood up, and on looking  
out perceived a little boy kneeling in  
the middle of the highway, which was  
in that part only just sufficiently wide  
for the carriage. She called out to  
know who it was. "It is little Tom  
"the stable-boy, please your lady-  
"ship," said the coachman, "he was  
"turned away yesterday morning by  
"your ladyship's orders."

"I gave no such orders," said Lady  
N. "let the boy come here to speak  
"to me."

"Bless me," cried Mrs. Pegg, "I  
"dare say Mr. Ditto (the steward)  
"has mistaken me. I told him yes-  
"terday that I was sure if your lady-  
"ship knew what a sad liar this little  
"fellow



"fellow was, you would not keep him another day about the house; but I did not say your ladyship had dismissed him—I wonder how he could mistake me so."

"I wonder so too," growled the coachman; "I never knew Mr. Ditto make blunders, nor did little Tom ever tell a fib in all his life, as I knows of."

Tom was by this time at the carriage-door, a piteous spectacle. Stripped of his livery, and having outgrown his former clothes, he had, in order to secure himself from the inclemency of the weather, fastened his old coat upon his back by bringing the sleeves round his neck, and tying them in a hard knot upon his breast, where they conveniently hung, as they now served the office of a handkerchief, in wiping the tears from his swollen eyes.

Lady

Lady N. could not but compassionate the little wretch. In a mild tone she desired him to tell what he wanted, but to be sure to speak the truth, for that she could not endure any one that told lies.

"No, my lady, Ize never told no lies since I was born, my lady. My lord there can tell you it was not I, was it, my lord? Pray tell your lady mamma; was it I that 'ticed you out the day you fell into the mud and dirtied all your clothes so? and when Mrs. Pegg was so hugeous angry? Do pray speak, my dear sweet young lord, was it I?"

"No," said Lord N. looking wistfully up in his mother's face, "indeed, indeed, mamma, it was not Tom's fault."

"I know not what you speak of, my dear child," said Lady N.

"I said so," cried Tom, "I said my  
"lady

“lady knew nothing of the matter, I  
 “was sure and certain, my lady, that  
 “it was all a story of Mrs. Pegg’s  
 “own making, and that you never  
 “would have had the heart, my lady,  
 “to order her to twist off the neck of  
 “my pretty pigeon.”

“You little abominable lying vaga-  
 “bond,” said Mrs. Pegg, lifting up  
 her voice, and casting her indignant  
 regards on the unfortunate outcast,  
 “what is it that you dare to say of  
 “me?”

“I say,” cried Tom, agitated with  
 fresh emotion, “I say that you said  
 “as how that my lady said, that my  
 “lord caught cold by following of  
 “me; and that it was I that ’ticed  
 “him into the yard, and that it was  
 “by my lady’s orders that you twisted  
 “off the head of my pretty pigeon.  
 “Lady Mary saw you do it; aye,  
 “she saw you do it, and she saw you  
 “throw

“ throw the bloody head in my face,  
 “ too, and heard you tell me that I  
 “ should be served in the same way  
 “ myself. And she heard you say,  
 “ too, that it was all my lady's orders.  
 “ Did not you my Lady Mary? I am  
 “ sure you will not say you did'nt.”

The poor Lady Mary sadly discomfited by this appeal, sat trembling and silent. Three times the truth rose to her lips, and a voice within her heart told her that she ought to give it utterance. But a glance from the eyes of Mrs. Pegg silenced the feeble voice of conscience, and repelled the truth that sat upon the tongue. Lady N. looked at her daughter in surprise, “ and do you know any thing of this, “ my love?” said she, taking her kindly by the hand.

“ Do, pray tell,” cried Mrs. Pegg, in a tone which Lady Mary perfectly well knew how to interpret, “ did you  
 “ ever

"ever see me do such a thing in your life? *Me* twist off the head of a tame pigeon! Do, pray tell, my dear, I *insist* upon your speaking."

Lady Mary was still silent.

"Bless you, dear sweet young lady, speak," cried Tom. "I am sure and certain you can't have forgotten."

"Was there ever such impudence!" cried Mrs. Pegg in a voice half choaked with rage, "you little story-telling villain, I shall know who it is that has put you upon this." Then turning to Lady Mary, whose hand she at the same time seized with vehemence, "tell this moment, I insist upon it. Did you ever see me do such a thing?"

"No," faintly uttered the too timid Lady Mary; the consciousness of so flagrantly departing from truth and justice, dying her face with crimson as she spoke.

"Now,"

"Now," cried Mrs. Pegg, in exultation. "Now, my lady, I hope you will believe, I hope you see what a knave this is: if your ladyship chuses to listen to him all day you will have plenty of stories, I'll be bound for it."

"You know it is no story," said Tom, "indeed, indeed, my lady, it is no story; I have not a friend in the wide world, but God; and my mammy told me God would be my friend while I told the truth. Indeed, my lady, I don't lye, and if your ladyship's honour will let me go back to the castle, I will bring proof that I don't."

"What astonishing impudence!" cried Mrs. Pegg, turning up the whites of her eyes, "I wonder how your ladyship can encourage such a depraved little wretch. I should hope your ladyship cannot possibly  
"take

"take his word against mine and Lady Mary's too! Shall I bid the coachman drive on?"

Lady N. silently assented. The coachman smacked his whip. The horses darted forward, and poor honest little Tom was left a helpless orphan, destitute and forlorn, to seek his way through a world in which he saw hypocrisy and falsehood triumph over innocence and truth; and in which he found the ear of the powerful to be only open to favourites and flatterers, even when justice and judgment lifted up the voice!

Had Lady N. been sensible of the fatal impression which her conduct at that moment made upon the mind of a fellow creature,—had she foreseen the consequences which ensued from depriving this, then innocent boy, of the confidence which he had been taught to put in the certain success  
of

of integrity, she would have been struck with horror! But though these consequences were too remote to be distinctly foreseen, she must doubtless be considered as responsible for them, in so far as she acted upon other principles than those which her heart and conscience most seriously approved.

She was in reality far from being satisfied that Mrs. Pegg was free from blame, and far from being convinced that the boy said what was false ; but she had not courage to pursue an enquiry, which, if it terminated to the disadvantage of her favourite, would disturb her own peace ; and which would at any rate give a sad shock to her poor nerves !

The principle of selfishness was, therefore, in Lady N. more powerful than the principle of justice. She had from youth been accustomed to cultivate



tivate the one, for it is evident that it had become a habit of her mind ;— and she had from youth been accustomed *only to talk* of the other, so that it had no real influence upon her conduct. Lady N. was mild, and amiable, and gentle, as heart could wish, yet here we see her guilty of an act of cruelty and oppression, of which a person of a less yielding disposition, and who had been actuated by steady principle would never have been guilty.

Even for the crimes into which Mrs. Pegg was led, Lady N. was in a great measure accountable. Had she considered the influence she possessed as a trust received from God, a talent which she was bound to employ to the best advantage, she would not have deemed herself excusable in thus disposing of it. The ambition which led Mrs. Pegg from crime to crime,  
would

would have been crushed in its very birth. Her talents would have been employed in their proper sphere; and her merit judged of, not merely according to the height of its artificial gloss; but by the rigid rules of truth and justice. The poor woman would by this means have escaped the misery into which she was afterwards led by the gradual but overpowering force of great temptations.

As to Lady Mary, we cannot but consider her as an object of pity. She had been told to respect truth, yet was placed in a situation where to speak truth required a degree of fortitude beyond her strength. She had never been taught the necessity of exerting it. But had religious principle been implanted in her heart, she would have felt that it was less daring to offend Mrs. Pegg, than to offend her creator and her judge. She would therefore

therefore at all events have run the risk of incurring Mrs. Pegg's displeasure, rather than soil the pure integrity of her mind, by giving utterance to a wilful falsehood. Granting that through timidity she had permitted herself to be inadvertently hurried into this grievous error; she would, upon reflection, have hastened to repair it, and by an ingenuous confession of the truth, have wiped the stain from her conscience. Thus would the principles of honour and humanity have been upheld by the principles of religion.

Happy they who are taught the practice, while they are initiated into the precepts of virtue! Happy they who at an early period, have acquired sufficient resolution to adhere with firmness to the principles in which they have been thus instructed!

The fruits of this firmness of mind  
are

are so admirably represented by a Latin poet, that I cannot better conclude this letter than by transcribing a translation :

The man whose mind on virtue bent,  
Pursues some greatly good intent,  
With undiverted aim,  
Serene beholds the angry crowd,  
Nor can their clamours fierce and loud  
His stubborn honour tame.

Not the proud tyrant's fiercest threat,  
Nor storms that from their dark retreat:  
The lawless surges wake ;  
Nor Jove's dread bolt that shakes the pole,  
The firmer purpose of his soul  
With all its power can shake.

## LETTER X.

IN the story of "The tame Pigeon," I have presented my dearest Lady Elizabeth with an example of injustice, produced, not by the operation of any malignant passion, but merely by a deficiency in point of firmness. I have shewn that where fortitude and resolution are wanting, the knowledge of duty will not preserve from a failure in the practice of it, and consequently will not produce those habits of thinking and acting, which, from the constancy of their operation, are termed principles.

I shall now illustrate the force of these habits from characters of a  
M stronger

stronger texture ; and elucidate the consequences that attend them by relating a few anecdotes in the lives of two young noblemen of distinction whom I shall describe under their christian names of Frederic and Albert.

In infancy these two young gentlemen were placed in circumstances apparently similar. They were alike subjected to the disadvantage of being almost entirely confined to the society of low-born and illiterate persons : for, except an hour or two of every day, they lived, as children in their station generally do, with the servants in the nursery.\* Happily, however, for Albert, he in the nursery met with an excellent instructress ; it being his good fortune to have for an attendant one who considered herself

\* To this remark there are some very honourable exceptions.

as not merely accountable to her master and mistress, but accountable to God for the charge she had undertaken. This young woman was ignorant of the wisdom of the schools, but she was well acquainted with the precepts of the gospel: she had imbibed its spirit, and the law of God was written in her heart.

To the latest period of his life, Albert owned his obligations to this humble instructress of his infancy, whose declining age was more effectually cheered by the acknowledgments of his gratitude, than by all the favours his liberal heart bestowed. "By others," said he, "I was taught to say there was a God, from her I first learned to make inferences from the important truth. But for her I make no doubt I should to the present day have had my mind clouded by a thousand vulgar prejudices

M 2

"and

“and superstitions which would have taken too strong a hold of my imagination to have been eradicated; nay, but for her,” he would add with a smile, “but for her, I verily believe I should have been a blockhead!”

A country gentleman to whom he one day made these remarks, as they returned together from a ride to the pretty cottage which was built by Albert for this old domestic, asked him, with some degree of astonishment, how it could possibly happen that one born in so high a rank should have been so much indebted to one in a menial station for all this instruction. “Had not your Lordship a tutor? Had you not masters to attend to your improvement?”

“O yes,” replied Albert. “I had tutors and masters in abundance. But all for the head, and none for the heart. And how was I prepared



"prepared for their instructions?  
 "Why, I shall tell you. By being  
 "taught to think that as heir to a  
 "great fortune, I was born to enjoy  
 "pleasure, and that whatever inter-  
 "rupted that enjoyment was injus-  
 "tice. Lessons were a grievous in-  
 "terruption to my enjoyment; les-  
 "sons I consequently hated. Hated  
 "them the more, because they were  
 "unconnected with all the previous  
 "habits of my infancy. I had in that  
 "state none of the advantages which  
 "your children, my good sir, enjoy.  
 "They, by living almost entirely un-  
 "der the eye of their mother, have  
 "their faculties imperceptibly opened,  
 "and imbibe their first notions from  
 "the mind of a gentlewoman. I on  
 "the contrary, was cooped up in a  
 "nursery, without objects to rouse or  
 "to gratify curiosity that were not of  
 "a nature injurious to the mind. I  
 "heard

" heard of the quarrels and the loves  
 " of servants ; was acquainted with  
 " all the different cuts and colours of  
 " the different liveries worn by the  
 " favourites of our maids ; knew why  
 " Tom left his place, and why Jack  
 " resolved to keep his ; and was also  
 " embued with a deep sense of the  
 " glory that resulted from a fine stud  
 " of horses, magnificent equipages,  
 " and a splendid table. But as for  
 " knowledge or virtue, I might be  
 " told they were very proper and be-  
 " coming a gentleman, but it cer-  
 " tainly was not among the people  
 " with whom my time was spent, that  
 " I found they were ever seriously  
 " thought so.

" My ignorance was greater than  
 " you can conceive. I literally be-  
 " lieved the moon to be a great cheese,  
 " and that the trees in the park were  
 " made by the gardener ; and this not  
 " from

"from any peculiar deficiency of in-  
 "tellect, but because my attention  
 "had never been directed to the exa-  
 "mination of any natural objects.  
 "Indeed, from my own experience  
 "and from all that I have since ob-  
 "served, I am inclined to think that  
 "much of the stupidity which we mis-  
 "take for natural deficiency, is purely  
 "accidental ; and solely owing to ne-  
 "glecting the faculties, till they have  
 "for want of exercise become ob-  
 "tuse."

The gentleman fully assented to  
 the observation, but still could not  
 imagine how the misfortune should  
 have been experienced by Albert ; or,  
 if it was, how the person they had  
 just seen could have contributed to  
 remedy it.

"I shall tell you," replied Albert.  
 "I was just turned of six, when Bell  
 "came into the family. I had been  
 "taught

"taught to read English by my sis-  
 "ter's governess, who went over the  
 "routine of lessons, exactly as the  
 "horse which you see in yonder farm-  
 "yard, goes round in turning the  
 "threshing-mill. The horse thinks as  
 "much of the price of the wheat, as  
 "she did of the progress of the mind;  
 "and, like him, when she has gone  
 "her appointed rounds, she thought  
 "she had fully done her duty.

"In fact Mrs. Middleditch did all  
 "that could with justice be expected.  
 "She had served an apprenticeship  
 "to certain accomplishments and by  
 "teaching them she was to gain her  
 "bread. To these her time and atten-  
 "tion had been exclusively devoted;  
 "she considered them as her trade, and  
 "every thing beyond them as out of  
 "the way of her business. For above  
 "twenty years this woman had lived  
 "in the houses of persons of rank, an  
 "insulated

" insulated being, removed to an equal  
 " distance from those above her, and  
 " from those below ; without ever hav-  
 " ing experienced the sympathies of  
 " friendship, or the heart-improving  
 " pleasure of a free communication of  
 " sentiment. In such a state the  
 " delicacy of the moral feeling can  
 " scarcely fail of being lost. Complete  
 " selfishness becomes in a manner ne-  
 " cessary. It was impossible that  
 " she should conciliate my affec-  
 " tion who never treated me with ten-  
 " derness ; impossible that she should  
 " inspire me with respect, whom I knew  
 " to be by others disrespected."\*

" An

\* It is not to be supposed that Albert, in what  
 he here said, intended to cast any reflection upon  
 a very deserving and very unfortunate class of  
 persons, among whom may often be found vir-  
 tues of most sterling value, and talents of the  
 highest order. He seems merely to allude to the  
 situation

"An accident of a broken leg  
 "which I got by a childish frolick,  
 "released me from lessons, and placed  
 "me entirely under the care of Bell,  
 "to whose watchful assiduity I was  
 "more indebted than to the skill of  
 "all my medical attendants. She  
 "gave up nothing to peevishness, no-  
 "thing to caprice; but without, on  
 "her part, exerting any of the ty-  
 "ranny of control, she taught me to  
 "control myself. She opened my  
 "heart to religious sentiment, she  
 "prepared my mind for religious  
 "truths. By a thousand ingenious  
 "contrivances, she elucidated things

situation of governesses in families of distinction,  
 as unfavourable to the culture of the sympathetic  
 and benevolent affections; and of the education  
 which is thought to qualify them for the under-  
 taking, as foreign to the cultivation of the heart  
 and understanding.

"that

" that appeared at first so entirely  
 " above my capacity, as to have ren-  
 " dered the case hopeless to any that  
 " was not inspired with an equal  
 " zeal. I am even now surprized when  
 " I reflect on all that was taught me  
 " by this unlearned and simple girl ;  
 " for never through life have I been  
 " able to detect a fallacy in any of the  
 " precepts she enjoined, or to perceive  
 " an error in any of the judgments on  
 " which she had formed them.

" During the two years that elapsed  
 " between the period of my accident  
 " and my being sent to school, a deli-  
 " cate state of health rendered it neces-  
 " sary that I should live much by the  
 " sea-side ; and thither I was attended  
 " by Bell, who had thus an opportunity  
 " of acquiring an ascendancy over my  
 " mind, which she used for the noblest  
 " purposes. Never have I in any  
 " station met with a person so com-  
 " pletely

"pletely devoid of selfishness: and  
 "the constant opportunity I had of  
 "witnessing the candour and single-  
 "hearted sincerity of her words and  
 "actions, rendered it impossible for  
 "me to be mistaken. But how could  
 "it be otherwise? She lived under  
 "the constant consciousness of the  
 "presence of the God she worshipped;  
 "and looked to him, not only as the  
 "judge of her actions, but of her  
 "most secret thoughts; and, after  
 "all that I have seen of the world, I  
 "must confess I have ever found this  
 "the fountain of the purest honour,  
 "and of the soundest philosophy."

By what Albert has here said of  
 himself, you will perceive that in his  
 childhood he was prepared for enter-  
 ing with advantage on the stage of  
 youth. Nor did he make any retro-  
 grade steps in the course of improve-  
 ment. In youth he found that he  
 had



had still the remains of many bad habits to correct, many untoward propensities to conquer. That the time allotted him to prepare for the important part he was to act on the theatre of life, was short; and that much was to be crowded into the narrow space. He therefore set himself with assiduity to the task before him. When he was at any time induced by indolence to relax the vigour of application, or seduced by pleasure entirely to relinquish it, his principles opposed a barrier to seduction, and re-animated him to fresh exertion.

“ If I waste the present hours,” he would say to himself, “ what shall I be hereafter? Despised for my ignorance, and pitied for my folly. And will not God call me to account for thus neglecting to improve the talents with which he has entrusted me?”

These

These and similar reflections became, by their frequent recurrence, so habitual, as to operate upon his mind without his being conscious of their operation. His reverence for the Divine Being appeared innate and spontaneous, and was not affected by time, nor place, nor situation, nor circumstances. This is that fear of God which is spoken of in Scripture as the beginning of wisdom. Nor was it in the mind of Albert, nor will it ever be in any mind that has been duly prepared, a solitary principle. It did not lead to a cold and formal performance of duty, from a slavish dread of punishment. His heart rejoiced in the assurance, that the God who called him into being, intended that he should be happy; and had put it in his power to contribute to the happiness of others.

His father was proud of such a  
son,

son, (and what father would not have been proud of so fine a boy?) but Albert made no selfish or ungenerous use of his father's partiality. He considered the power it afforded him as a trust, for which he was responsible; and contrived to convert every instance of partial indulgence into a means of augmenting the happiness of his younger and less favoured brothers and sisters. They looked up to him, while he was yet a child, as a guardian angel sent to dispense felicity; and as he was the umpire in all their little quarrels, they learned from him, even in infancy, a strict sense of truth and justice.

It must be owned, that on certain occasions Albert was very deficient in the coolness which might have been thought becoming in a young philosopher. His feelings were too lively, his benevolence was too warm, to endure

endure the sight of misery. He could not bear to witness the infliction of punishment, even where he knew it to have been deserved ; and would rather have gone without his dinner for a week, than listened to the cries of one of his infant brothers in disgrace. This, in the eyes of some, may possibly appear a weakness. But from those who scoff at it as such, I should be glad to know, whether benevolence has ever taken deep root in any heart that was destitute of sympathy ?

It is now time to see how Frederic has gone on. But he is too dignified a personage to be introduced at the end of a letter : so we shall, if you please, leave him for the subject of the next epistle.

## LETTER XI.

THE nursery education of Frederic differed in no respects from that of Albert, except that, as an only child, he acquired still higher notions of his own importance. He might from this alone have imbibed a sufficient quantity of self-consequence. Indeed, how is it possible that a child who feels itself the great and sole object of attention, should do otherwise! But, in addition to this misfortune, which it requires no little pains to counteract, Frederic had that of being for ever reminded

N by

by those around him, that he was born to be *a great man!* that is to say, born to the inheritance of a great estate; for this was the only idea of greatness which any of the people about him happened to have. I must beg, however, that you may not from this imagine that Frederic was ever, *in direct terms*, told by any one, that his situation in life gave him a right to do what he pleased; but as every thing he saw and heard tended to inspire him with this notion, it amounted in reality to just the same thing.

He was taught to say his prayers; but in saying them his heart was never taught to rise with a sense of awe and gratitude to the great Being to whom they were addressed. Having learned to consider all that he enjoyed as a right, he looked on nothing as a blessing; and as for the  
wants

wants or miseries of others, it never entered into his mind that he had any business to feel for them; far less, you may believe, would he have entertained a thought of relieving them.

As he advanced in years, he enjoyed, as may be supposed, superior opportunities of improvement. He was placed under the care of able tutors, and might doubtless in youth have retrieved the errors of his childhood: and why he did not do so, appears at first view very unaccountable. He did not want capacity; he in a short time acquired, for his years, a considerable stock of knowledge. He was perfectly well acquainted with the nature of truth and justice, and the theory of moral obligation. He had read the lives of many illustrious men, and the precepts of many sage philosophers. He

had likewise been instructed in the doctrines of revealed religion ; and never entertained a doubt of its truth. But all this knowledge was to him like the miser's treasure, which he carefully locks up in his iron chest, pleased with the idea of having so much in his possession, but is so far from using it, that he denies himself the common necessities of life, and starves in the midst of plenty. Of as little use to Frederic was all the knowledge he possessed. On reading of a noble and magnanimous action, it never once occurred to him to ask, " Is it thus that I would have " done in similar circumstances? Am " I capable of this generosity, or " this degree of self-control? Are " these the precepts by which my ac- " tions have been governed? or, is " this the spirit I must imbibe before " I can be truly worthy?" Had he frequently



frequently thus referred to his own heart, the notions of integrity and honour, which in the course of his education he could not help acquiring, would have been confirmed into principles. Still more effectually would they have been thus confirmed, had he considered the doctrines of religion as of practical use. But though he neither disbelieved in God nor denied the evidences of revelation; his belief was too weak and desultory, either to purify his heart or influence his conduct.

His belief never restrained him in the career of passion; it never occurred to check the impulse of any irregular desire; and when the remonstrances of others, or his own conscience, told him he had done wickedly, it never prevented him from exclaiming, in all the arrogance of

of pride, "To whom am I accountable for my conduct?"

With grief the father of Frederic beheld the fatal consequences of his own too fond indulgence; but he had now lost all authority; for Frederic, at sixteen, was by the will of a grandmother put in possession of an independent fortune. He had lost his mother in infancy, and his father now married again; but though the connection promised to augment his domestic happiness, and was in every respect a suitable one, it unfortunately did not please his son, who thought he had a right to be offended, not because his father pleased himself, but because he had not consulted him.

It will to you, I am assured, appear extremely unnatural, that the partial affection of a father should meet with  
this

this unworthy return. It was not, however, in fact unnatural; for it was the inevitable consequence of the selfishness which that partiality had been the means of nurturing, while no generous principle had been implanted to check its growth.

Frederic and Albert were about the same time sent upon their travels; and though the estates of their fathers were contiguous, had seen little of each other till they now met in Germany. Each was accompanied by his tutor. The person who attended Albert in that capacity was far from being worthy of the important trust, to which he had been recommended by a nobleman who knew little of his real character. It was soon, however, discovered by Albert, who, through all his pretensions, saw the meanness of his soul. His principles were now too well fixed to be injured

injured by the society of one, who was as much his inferior in talents as in virtue; but he confessed he could scarcely forbear envying Frederic of the advantages he enjoyed, in having as the companion of his travels, a gentleman of amiable manners, elevated sentiments, and highly accomplished mind.

It may appear extraordinary, that this gentleman should have been fixed upon by Frederic himself, as the only person with whom he would go abroad: and that he was in this so peremptory, as positively to tell his father, that unless he prevailed on Mr. Milner to accompany him, he never would quit England. But then it must be remembered, that Mr. Milner had just refused assent to a similar application from a nobleman of superior rank, of whom Frederic was particularly jealous, and over whom he

he considered it as a triumph to prevail. Mr. Milner's character too, his connections, his situation in life, and above all, that spirit of independence, which rendered him so extremely reluctant to put himself in any degree in the power of another, were additional incentives, stimulating Frederic to such exertions as he never before had made in any virtuous enterprise,

Motives, indeed, of a nature far less excusable than any of those which I have now mentioned, were afterwards discovered by Mr. Milner: but those we have no business at present to disclose. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Milner, though he knew what Frederic's conduct had in some instances been, was from his conversation led to believe, that he had deeply repented of his former errors, and that he was now a convert to virtue,

virtue, upon conviction and principle. Animated by the hope of confirming him in his good resolutions, and warmed by contemplating the picture his imagination drew, of the beneficial consequences which might result to society from the character which, he flattered himself, he should in a great measure have it in his power to form, Mr. Milner, yielding rather to the feelings of his own heart, than to the solicitations of Frederic, consented to accompany him: he consented without, on his part, having made either treaty or stipulation; nor did it ever enter into the old gentleman's mind to doubt the sincerity of the strong expressions of esteem and gratitude which his young friend so very liberally bestowed.

Mr. Milner had not seen enough of the world to distinguish between the complacency which arises from a temporary

temporary triumph of the will, and that which is the offspring of genuine benignity. Frederic seemed to listen to his conversation with infinite delight. He acquiesced in the truth of all his observations, and perhaps felt for a time all that he seemed to feel. But the impression was not sufficiently deep, nor of sufficient duration, to change the long confirmed habits of his mind. He afforded an admirable illustration of the parable given by St. Luke, which under the figure of a house, out of which the evil spirit has been driven, describes the state of a man who has made a few feeble efforts at amendment.

As good habits (the furniture of the mind) cannot be immediately formed, the house remains for some time "empty, swept, and garnished." "Then returneth he," (the evil spirit,  
the

the predominant vice or passion,) "and taketh to him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there : and *the last state of that man is worse than the first.*" So it unfortunately happened with regard to Frederic.

Albert, when he met with Mr. Milner and his pupil, was on his way to visit the silver mines in Hungary, to which he was led by the enlightened curiosity that inspires the true votary of science with an ardour which scorns to think of danger or fatigue. Yet natural history was to Albert only as a favourite amusement. It was a pursuit in which he delighted, and to which he destined his future hours of leisure, but to which he resolved never to give up a moment which ought to be devoted to the fulfilment of any important duty. In order to qualify him for  
assuming



assuming with becoming dignity that high place in society which he was soon to fill, he considered the acquirements of knowledge, in all its various branches, and the cultivation of taste in all its harmonious connections, to be essentially necessary. But he would as soon have thought of becoming a fiddler or a dancing-master, as a mere collector of shells and pebbles.

In little minds, even great objects become little, because in such minds all objects are connected with the littleness of self-important vanity. But when the heart and the understanding are equally enlarged, the elevation of mind that attends on scientific pursuits, becomes a source of pleasure, deeper and richer than any that selfish vanity or ambition ever dreamed of.

Frederic could not conceive what  
amusement

amusement Mr. Milner and Albert could find in exploring rocks and mountains, which appeared to him so wild and barren : but on hearing of the silver mines, he readily acquiesced in the proposal of visiting them, as he thought *they* certainly must afford something worth seeing. The questions he asked were numerous ; but they were all confined to one point, viz. the sterling value : and often as the calculation was repeated, he never heard of the amount without wishing, with a sigh, that he too had a silver mine !

“ And why this wish for enormous wealth, my dear sir ? ” said Mr. Milner. “ Is not your present fortune sufficient for your present wants ? ”

“ O, I don't want to spend more than I do just at present,” returned Frederic ; “ but then with a silver mine ! O how many things one  
“ might

“might do with the revenues of a  
“silver mine!”

“Believe me, if you do not find  
“satisfaction in making a good use  
“of the fortune you already com-  
“mand, you would feel no enjoy-  
“ment in possessing the revenues of  
“an empire.”

“Sir,” replied Frederic, “my for-  
“tune is my own, and I spend it as  
“I please; and, thank God, I am ac-  
“countable to no one for my con-  
“duct!”

“Not even to God himself?” re-  
joined Mr. Milner emphatically. Fre-  
deric hastily let down the front glass  
of the carriage, and, though they  
were then going at a hand gallop,  
desired the postillions to mend their  
pace.

They travelled with great rapidity,  
and were already in view of the  
mountains, from whose treasures

Albert



Albert hoped to add to his stock of knowledge, when an accident, which happened to one of the carriages, obliged them to stop for a few days at a village not many leagues distant from the principal mine.

The second day after their arrival at this place, Albert and his tutor, accompanied by Frederic and a person of the name of Snakeroot, a college friend of Frederic's, who had, *apparently by accident*, joined his party at the Hague, set out upon a long walk, to which Mr. Milner was unequal. The country was mountainous; but the scenery was romantic, and amply repaid them for the trouble they had taken in exploring it. As they were returning from their ramble, they were attracted by the roar of a water-fall, of which they determined to have a view; and, directed by the noise of the cataract, proceeded

proceeded through a deep valley into a narrow rocky glen, where they beheld the entrance into several mines. The whole appeared to them to have been long deserted. Nor did they observe the track of human footstep, except at one particular place, and in following it, they were led to the mouth of a deep and horrible pit, which Albert immediately conjectured to be the shaft of one of the copper mines, with which that part of the country abounded. Near the top of the dark abyss, a bucket, half filled with ore, was suspended by a strong rope from a windlass, which appeared to be worked by a wheel of complicated machinery. The construction of it was not understood by any of the party. A wish for information on the part of Albert, and a vague curiosity on the part of his companions, rendered them equally

o

eager

eager to discover the secret spring by which the machine was to be set in motion; and in a fatal moment the discovery was made by both the young gentlemen in the same instant.

Albert would have paused for reflection, but Frederic was impetuously urgent to try the experiment without delay. The tutor and Snakeroot lent their assistance. The hasp was lifted. The bucket began instantly to descend with violence. The wheel turned furiously round. They had no means of stopping the frightful velocity of its movement, nor a moment's time to escape the consequences of its destructive force. It broke to pieces with a dreadful crash, and sent about the fragments of its broken limbs in every direction but that in which the travellers stood; so that they were saved almost by miracle from  
from

from destruction. They all in the same moment thought they heard a groan issue from the bottom of the pit ; but as no answer was returned to the earnest inquiries of Albert, they imagined they had been mistaken ; and, greatly agitated by their adventure, hastened to quit the scene of their atchievement.

On coming to the narrow pass by which they had entered the glen, and which indeed seemed to be no other than a fissure opened in the rock by some convulsion of nature, they observed a placard, which had before escaped their notice.

It began by enumerating the many titles of the high and puissant baron to whom these mountains and their mines belonged ; and then prohibited, upon pain of confiscation of goods, and loss of life and limb, all persons, of whatever rank or degree, from

entering that pass without a special licence.

Of this many-titled baron they had already heard, and knew him to be represented as one of the most impracticable of all the petty tyrants that pride, power, and property, ever produced. On discovering to whom the place belonged, Albert, who had at first determined to give immediate information of what had been done, in order to reimburse the proprietor for the damage, agreed to postpone offering the compensation, till they were out of the reach of his jurisdiction, and proceeded with his companions to the inn, where they had left Mr. Milner.

Here Albert found letters, forwarded by express from Vienna, the contents of which left him but faint hopes of being able, with all the speed he could use, to reach England  
in



in time to receive his father's blessing. Not a moment was to be lost : for, though by the accounts of the physicians he might linger possibly for some months, the probability was equally great, that another paralytic shock would terminate his days at a moment's warning.

A sense of filial duty would have been alone sufficient to determine Albert; but he so truly loved his father, that every idea of duty and of gratitude were so blended with affection, he could scarcely discriminate between them. A thousand instances of his father's truly parental tenderness rushed upon his mind, and seemed to reproach him with his involuntary absence, as if it had been a crime.

All the letters from his other friends he perused and laid aside ; but a few  
lines

lines written by a stranger, and subscribed, in characters scarcely legible, by his father's hand, he, after having plentifully bedewed with his tears, placed on his bosom. The contents were, however, made known to all the party. His father assured him that he viewed the approach of death without dismay, though he confessed, that if it had so pleased God, he should have been glad to have seen his eldest son of age before he died, as on that circumstance depended his power of making a provision for his younger children suitable to their birth. He however knew, he said, the generosity of that heart to which he now commended them, and should say no more upon the subject. He then, after some tender expressions of affection, concludes by thanking God for having

in

in mercy given him such a son, and on his head implored a thousand thousand blessings.

All was now in the hurry of preparation for Albert's departure. His carriages were drawn out, and only waited for the tardy postboys, when, as he stood at a window giving directions to his servants, Frederic and Snakeroot being at another window in the same apartment, they saw a small party of armed men driving before them a prisoner loaded with chains, and followed by a sledge, on which lay a poor wretch apparently in great pain, and who was likewise in fetters.

The landlord, of whom they instantly inquired the meaning of what they saw, told them that these poor fellows were miners: that they were going to be shut up in one of the dungeons of the castle, and would  
probably

probably never more see the light of day; for that it was whispered the mines had not gone on well of late, and that the baron was in very bad humour; "and when that is the case," said Josephus, "we all of us know the consequences. His highness cares no more for the life of a poor man, than I do for that bit of straw," blowing away a piece that had been sticking to his whiskers.

"Well, but what have these poor wretches done?"

"O, a great deal of mischief, to be sure," returned Josephus: "they have betwixt them broke the piece of machinery that came all the way from Prague, for working one of the mines in Valla Pétra. They both deny it; but there was no one else to do it; so it must either have been them or the devil. Indeed one  
" of

“of them swears it was the devil;  
 “and that had it not been for Saint  
 “Antony, who made him fall as he  
 “was running out of his way, the  
 “evil spirit would have crushed him  
 “to pieces with the bucket, whereas  
 “he had power to do no more than  
 “just to snap his thigh-bone in  
 “two.”

“And did the poor fellow actually  
 “receive this injury by the fall of  
 “the bucket?” exclaimed Albert.  
 “How shocking! how dreadfully  
 “shocking!”

“O the broken leg is nothing at  
 “all, please your lordship, to what he  
 “has yet to suffer,” said the landlord.  
 “Before it is set he will have the  
 “screws put upon his thumbs, I’ll lay  
 “my life for it; and——”

“Come, come,” cried Albert, in-  
 terrupting him, “let us hasten to  
 “save this poor creature from further  
 “suffering.

"suffering. Would to God we could  
 "as easily relieve him from the pain  
 "of his broken leg ! Come, Frederic,  
 "we must make haste."

Albert was already at the door,  
 from which he was pulled back by  
 his tutor, who warmly remonstrated  
 on his rashness.

"Think, my lord," cried he, "think  
 "to what a risk you expose yourself."

"Yes," re-echoed Snakeroot, "pray,  
 "my lord, think of the risk to which  
 "you expose yourself."

"And to which you would expose  
 "us all," said Frederic. "I confess,"  
 added he, "I have, for my share, no  
 "great taste for the pleasures of a  
 "dungeon. Think, besides, of being  
 "subjected to the insolence of such a  
 "fellow as this baron ! It would be  
 "quite intolerable !"

"Think !" repeated Albert in-  
 dignantly, "think of an innocent  
 "person

"person suffering on your account !

"Would not that be still more intolerable ?"

"O but these fellows are used to it," returned Frederic affecting to laugh.

"And consider," said the tutor, "how fully they would be recompensed by a little money."

"Yes, pray, my lord, think of that," cried Snakeroot. "Money, as this gentleman observes, will do any thing. By enough of that you could reconcile them to your breaking every limb of their bodies."

"And, sir," said Albert, "I should rather have every bone of my own broken on the rack than make such a despicable use of the advantage which fortune has given me over such miserable wretches ! What ! have these men no feeling because they happen to be poor ? Are they  
"to

"to be permitted to suffer torture in  
 "order to save us from a little per-  
 "sonal inconvenience? To suffer,  
 "too, on our account! For shame,  
 "gentlemen. How can any of you  
 "think of such a thing?"

"I think of nothing for myself,"  
 replied the tutor, lowering his tone,  
 "but just at the present moment I  
 "rather wonder you should seek to  
 "be detained—detained you don't  
 "know how long, when if my lord  
 "your father should in the mean time  
 "die, I—

"I know what I should in that  
 "event endure," said Albert firmly;  
 "but dearly as I prize my father's  
 "blessing, and much as I shall ever  
 "owe my father's memory, I must  
 "not forget what I owe myself. I  
 "in this case clearly see my duty,  
 "and I shall at all events perform  
 "it. I go instantly to the baron's,  
 "you



"you may accompany me or not, as you please."

"You are quite right, my dear fellow," said Frederic: "you don't think I could be in earnest in opposing you? I swear I only wished to save you the inconvenience of delay; but intended to surrender myself the moment you were gone. Nay, I assure you I did. Do you think I care for this paltry baron?"

"Pray stop, my lords," cried Snake-root, as the two young noblemen were leaving the room, "permit me to settle the business for you both. I shall go this moment to the baron's, and take the whole upon myself. You shall have no further trouble but to supply the cash."

"An excellent thought!" exclaimed Frederic, "you will manage it charmingly Snake-root, I make no doubt. But then, you know, you must

"must swear you had no one with you."

"O you may leave that to me," returned Snakeroot, nodding his head significantly. "But what says Albert?"

"I say," replied Albett, casting upon Snakeroot a look of contempt, "I say that I am not sufficiently enlightened to perceive the difference between telling a falsehood myself and permitting another to tell it for me, and that I should as soon be guilty of a base action, as accessory to one."

Thus saying, he walked out, and was followed by the others in silence to the baron's hall, where they were admitted just as the unfortunate miners were sentenced to the torture, in order to extort from them a confession of their guilt. The baron was still sitting in the seat of judgment, which,

which, on being informed of the rank of his visitors, he would have left, but was prevented by Albert; who entreated him to waste no time in superfluous ceremony, but to hasten to do justice to the innocent. He then turned to the miserable object who was stretched upon a litter, groaning under the pain of the fractured limb, and trembling with apprehension of still further tortures. Seizing his hard black hand, he kindly bid him be of good cheer, for that he should be taken care of for life.

While Albert was thus speaking comfort to the unfortunate miner, his tutor, anxious to exhibit his learning and talents, began to make in Latin a long speech to the baron. After a flourishing exordium, he came at length to state the facts, but gave such a colouring to the narration, as to make the lifting of the hasp appear purely

purely accidental ; asserting it to have been done by a jostle of his elbow.

Albert interrupted him.

“ I lifted the hasp,” said he, “ without thinking of the consequences. But I was at some trouble to lift it, so were we all. It did not fly up by accident. It could not.”

“ It could not, indeed,” exclaimed the baron. “ Noble and ingenuous youth, I respect your veracity. You begin life in the career of honour and of glory. Happy the father of such a son !”

The baron then broke up the court, released the prisoners, and, having in the handsomest manner refused all compensation for the damage, gave Albert and his party a cordial invitation to spend the day with him, affording a notable proof that there is no mind so callous as not to be impressed by a generous and noble action.

Anxious

Anxious as he was to set out on his journey homeward, Albert did not omit to visit the poor lame miner, before his departure ; and though he could not at once unite the fractured bone, he lulled its pain by pouring an exhilarating cordial on the heart.

Mr. Milner heard with delight all the particulars of this transaction, and was greatly pleased to observe that Frederic spoke with admiration of the conduct of his friend. Snake-root took notice of it likewise, and was more loud than either in praise of Albert, " who, were it not," he said, " for a little vanity, would be an excellent young man. As to his being so willing to delay his journey, he owned he would have considered it in a different light but for the hint which his father's letter contained of adding to his sisters' fortunes. Albert was too prudent to like to

P

" bind

"bind himself by such promises. O  
 "yes, Albert was very prudent! He  
 "would not hurry himself. Yet after  
 "all, he was an excellent young  
 "man!"

It is thus that the very praises of  
 the malicious are converted into  
 poisoned daggers, which give more  
 dangerous wounds than the swords  
 of avowed enemies. With this re-  
 mark I should conclude the present  
 letter, but that I think it may be of im-  
 portance to your future peace to have  
 it imprinted on your mind, that to  
 detract from the merit of a noble  
 action, by base insinuations with re-  
 gard to the motive, is the surest sign  
 of a depraved and corrupt heart.  
 You may with greater safety take a  
 viper to your bosom, than such a  
 person to your confidence.

Far, far be all the venomous tribe  
 removed from those I love!

Adieu.

## LETTER XII.

*My dear Lady Elizabeth,*

**F**LATTERING as it may be to me to imagine that you feel some desire to know a little of the subsequent history of the two young gentlemen whose opposite characters I have endeavoured to display, I must not at present permit myself the pleasure of gratifying your curiosity.

In my earnest desire to impress you with a thorough conviction of the importance of those first principles of religion and morality which form the

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basis

basis of every virtue, I have thought it expedient to make use of such illustrations, as might touch the heart through the medium of the imagination. Truth, in order to render herself pleasing to the youthful mind, must sometimes permit herself to be arrayed by the hand of fancy. When she appears thus decorated, some care is, however, necessary, lest the attention should be so much engaged by the drapery, as to overlook the symmetry and proportions of the figure which it conceals.

In order to prevent this, it is necessary to keep the "mind's eye" intently fixed upon the object proposed; to mark how far each circumstance corresponds with the general design, and how far it tends to place the truths it was its avowed purpose to illustrate, in a clearer point of view. When satisfied upon this head,  
it



it is then our duty to apply the moral to our hearts.

In the characters which I have exhibited, I have trusted little to fancy ; they have been sketched from experience and observation : but when characters are drawn for the mere purposes of illustration, nothing can be more absurd than to inquire when or where they lived, or indeed to mind whether they ever lived at all. The sole question to be asked is, whether such and such dispositions and opinions would naturally and inevitably lead to such and such consequences.

It is thus I would have you to examine what has been said of the characters now under review. It is thus, indeed, that I would advise you at all times to examine the purport of whatever is offered as an illustration of any moral truth. It is by exercising your judgment in this way  
that

that you can alone expect to reap any benefit from what you read ; and as I am very anxious to enforce upon you the observance of a practice which I believe to be so salutary, I shall, without making any apology for wearying you by repetitions, intreat your attention to the following remarks :

We see in Frederic and Albert, two persons of very opposite characters. We have traced whence the difference arose. We have seen that though they had the same notions respecting right and wrong, the same ideas of truth and falsehood, of vice and virtue ; the same belief in the government of the Supreme Being, and of a future state, and of all the doctrines of Christianity ; this knowledge and this belief was in the mind of one, speculative opinion ; in the mind of the other, active principle.

The-

The object of inquiry then is, whether this circumstance be in itself sufficient to account for such a difference of character as has been now exhibited? As our decision upon this point may be of great importance, it is necessary to proceed to the examination with all due seriousness and circumspection.

To aid our inquiry, let us see in what manner other powerful principles operate: that of self-preservation, for instance, the first with which we are thoroughly acquainted. It is a principle implanted in our minds by nature, but it is regulated by reason and experience. An infant after having been burned dreads the fire; but a grown person, of sound intellect, would shun the danger without having in his own person experienced the effects: nor would you or I, if, when we were walking at the foot of a precipice,

cipice, we saw a huge stone descending, stop to reason upon the propriety of getting out of its way. The principle of self-preservation would instantly inspire us with the desire of running off as fast as possible.

The desire of happiness is no less strong a principle than that of self-preservation : but our knowledge with respect to the means by which it is to be procured, is of less easy acquirement. It is a subject upon which we are extremely liable to be mistaken ; and as all our mistakes upon it have the force of the principle from which they proceed, and to which they are united, they cannot fail to be attended with very important consequences.

Frederic, you will observe, placed all his happiness in the gratification of every selfish wish—the indulgence of every selfish passion. Albert looked

ed beyond these to the approbation of God, and of his own conscience, and the esteem and love of his fellow creatures. They pursued their different objects with equal ardour. Frederic, without having taken any pains to regulate his inclinations, implicitly obeyed them, and gave himself completely up to the present impulse. Albert permitted no desire to harbour in his breast, that interfered with the fulfilment of any duty which he owed to God or man. The pure principles he had embraced were cherished in a pure heart; and, by being always steadily adhered to, became in a manner intuitive: they no longer required the aid of reflection, but presented themselves uncalled for, to regulate every thought, every word, and every action. The principle of selfishness was to Frederic, what the principles of religion and virtue were to Albert.

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It operated with the same force, and with the same certainty ; so that none that were thoroughly acquainted with the two characters would have expected any thing but what was noble, and generous, and virtuous in the one, or been disappointed at meeting with what was mean, and sordid, and dishonorable in the other.

No, my dear child, there is nothing upon which we can so much depend as upon the uniform operation of long cherished principle. Virtuous habits that are merely produced by situation will last just so long, and no longer than the situation remains unchanged. But when they are the effects of virtuous principle, they will be persevered in through every situation.

There is still another inference of much importance to which I would direct your attention. The knowledge of our duty, or, in other words, just

just and enlightened notions of our happiness, will not have in our minds the force of principles without some pains on our parts. The habit of referring to them, must be for some time persisted in, before they will have much influence upon our conduct. If we have not when young accustomed ourselves to do what was right, and because we knew it to be right, we will very soon come to do wrong though we know it to be wrong. Let, therefore, no day, no hour, nay, not so much as a minute of your time be spent without having been sanctified by a good intention. If you believe in God, and believe that he is ever present with you, let pleasing God be the constant object of your care. If I ask you how you may best please him ; you will answer by the performance of every duty. The great duty of youth is a zealous improvement

provement of every opportunity of instruction. Without applying the heart unto knowledge, knowledge will never be acquired ; but to practise what we already know, requires no less zeal, no less diligence and application, than to make new acquisitions in information. Both ought to be considered in the light of primary duties ; but the misfortune is, people too often imagine that if knowledge of duty is given, the practice of it will follow of course. I have therefore been at some pains to set you right in this particular ; and hope I have succeeded in convincing you, that though knowledge may be in a manner forced upon us by others, we must, for the formation of our principles, be in a great measure indebted to our own exertions.

By the different views of happiness that are set before us, we may no  
doubt



doubt be greatly influenced; and hence arises the chief advantage of instruction; but after we are capable of reflection, we cannot avoid giving such consideration to these views as renders our adopting or rejecting them our own deliberate act. The views of happiness that are adopted by a mean and narrow mind, are constantly circumscribed within the sordid limits of personal and immediate gratification. The person who embraces more enlarged and generous sentiments, extends his views of happiness to objects that are in their nature infinite, and in duration eternal! I leave it for you to decide which is likely to enjoy the greatest portion of felicity.

In contemplating the opposite conduct of Albert and Frederic, you will not hesitate where to give the preference. But do not imagine that in  
attaining

attaining that greatness of mind, for which he was through life remarkable, Albert was nowise indebted to his own exertions. Many were the temptations with which he had to struggle before his habits of virtue were sufficiently confirmed to afford him spontaneous succour and direction. Without religion these habits would never have been formed. Without religion they would not have had strength for the conflict. The advantages which he derived from religion we shall however leave for future consideration; and at present confine ourselves to a view of the obstacles which he had to surmount in persevering in an habitual adherence to the first principles of morality.

From his rank in life, he must have been inevitably exposed to the seductions of flattery. He saw and felt that he was considered as a person  
of

of some consequence by all around him. By the partiality of a fond father, his virtues were extolled, and his faults were palliated. But Albert examined the foundation of the praise which he received, and detected the exaggeration. He was therefore rather humbled by a sense of its being not fully merited, than elated by receiving applause beyond his deserts. From knowing that he could at an easy rate secure the approbation of a partial parent, he was taught not to trust to that approbation as a test of his real advancement in knowledge and virtue. From reading and from observation he collected the materials for a higher standard of merit; and though he continually fell short of the perfection at which he aimed, he with undaunted perseverance renewed his endeavours at attaining to it. It is thus that all  
noble

noble characters have been formed. I believe there is nothing more certain, than that those have ever fallen short of mediocrity, who did not raise their views very far beyond it.

As the family of Albert had long held a distinguished rank in society, its connections were numerous and powerful. But Albert resolved to rest his claim to respect upon his own individual merit; and when tempted to pique himself upon the claims of birth, he called to mind the numbers who, from having depended upon that claim, had sunk into contempt. He very early observed the difference of character that subsisted among those with whom he was connected; but was often tempted, by a natural partiality, to consider the vice or folly that appeared in any of them, as less vicious and less blameworthy than the vices and follies of others.

By

By a strict adherence to the principles of justice, he corrected this error. He was lenient to the faults of all; but he endeavoured to see and to judge of things as they really were; and thus, though no friend was ever more affectionate, he avoided being ensnared by his affections into the contagion of bad example.

Albert's love of truth led him from his early youth to prefer the solid esteem of such as were capable of appreciating his real worth, to the transient admiration of the fickle and undiscerning multitude. His manners were amiable and conciliating; but it was rather from the gentleness of his disposition that they were so, than from any studied wish to please. He looked round him, and perceived, that though artificial characters might for a time gain credit with the world for more than they were worth, their  
 o poverty

poverty never failed to be at length detected. He therefore never affected to appear other than he really was. He never spoke what he did not think. He never professed what he did not feel. He never promised what he did not mean to accomplish.

If you examine the conduct of Albert, you will perceive, that so far from losing any of the advantages of his situation, he increased their value. By adding the influence of virtue to that of rank and fortune, he extended the influence of the latter far beyond their usual bounds. He did this at the expense of a few sacrifices ; for we may be convinced that it was not without some pains that he acquired such a degree of self-control as enabled him so firmly to adhere to his principles. But these sacrifices were made in the beginning of his course.

Believe

Believe me, my dear child, it is these first steps that are the most important of your life. Take their importance into consideration, and you will guard them with vigilance. Turn neither to the right hand nor to the left in search of by-paths to happiness. Seek for it in the strait road of virtue; and when you are tempted from your course, reflect upon the motives which induced you to enter it, and you will thus invigorate your resolution. "Finally," to use the language of the apostle, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, I would lead you to think on these things. Those

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" things

" things which ye have learned and  
" received I would have you do,  
" and the God of peace shall be with  
" you."

Farewell!



## LETTER XIII.

It may perhaps appear strange to my dear young friend, that I have avoided entering into any particulars, with regard to the studies I would have her to pursue, the books I would recommend it to her to read, or the opinions I would wish her to adopt upon subjects that have, to many instructors, afforded an ample field of declamation and controversy.

These particulars I might doubtless have expatiated upon much to my  
own

own satisfaction; but I must beg leave to doubt whether it would have been much to your advantage. The studies which I recommended, it might not be in your power to pursue; the books which I approved, you might never have an opportunity to read; and the speculative opinions to which I gave my sanction, might have been found, as speculative opinions generally are, in some points erroneous, and consequently untenable. I could doubtless, with very little trouble to myself, have made such a display of wisdom and knowledge, as would have excited your admiration, and raised your conception of the extent of my capacity and attainments to a height that would have soared far beyond the truth. Had the gratification of my own vanity been the object I had in view, I should have found my account

count in having recourse to such ingenious devices for establishing my pretensions. But what benefit would have resulted to you from all this? None that I can see; except in as far as your vanity might have been gratified in having been the medium through which a lady apparently so wise and learned, chose to exhibit her attainments to the world.

By enforcing the principles which I had with so much success begun to unfold to you, I expect to render you a more essential service; and though in this I may deceive myself, I shall still have the comfort of reflecting, that as I was impelled to the task by pure affection, I have, in executing it, laid aside every consideration, but how I might render it most effectually beneficial to the dear objects of my tender love.

Rules, however judicious, are only  
applicable

applicable to particular circumstances; but principles are of universal application. The circumstances in which you now are placed may be suddenly altered. Your brothers must, and your sisters may, at the same age, be in situations that are in many respects dissimilar. But in no circumstances, in no situation, can the pure principles of religion and morality fail to be of use. In whatever degree the faculties of your mind may be cultivated, whether you are led to expand them by the acquirement of knowledge, or to employ them in the attainment of accomplishments, these principles will still be to you of equal value. They will still be found to form the stamina, the vital essence of your character.

The opinions which you form on subjects that are in anywise interesting, will generally be found to take  
their

their colouring from your principles. The love of truth, and a determined resolution of adhering to it, never fails to give to the judgment a soundness and a perspicacity which renders it quick in detecting the impositions of sophistry, and prevents it from espousing opinions merely because they are espoused by those in whose judgment we happen to place confidence. Upon such subjects as either from want of capacity, or opportunity, or inclination, we have not thoroughly examined, the principles of truth and justice will teach us to be silent. Nor will these principles permit us to repeat the opinions or observations of others as if they were our own; and thus taking credit to ourselves for a degree of information which we do not possess. Were this rule to be rigidly adhered to, it would, it is true, put to silence many a very eloquent

eloquent-tongue. But the praise that is due to eloquence ought not to seduce us from the duty that is due to truth.

The species of imposition to which I have just now alluded holds forth to vanity the alluring prospect of a triumph, purchased at so cheap a rate, that we cannot wonder so many should fall into the snare. Those who practise it will say in their defence, that it hurts no one: that the sentiments they borrow are intrinsically good, and that the knowledge which they retail as their own acquisition, loses nothing of its value from the deception. But does the mind that is thus practised in deception lose nothing? Can the spirit of integrity remain unsullied amid the consciousness of perpetual imposition? No: it is impossible. In every false appearance which we willingly

lingly assume, we depart from the principles of truth; and in every departure from these principles, we lessen their strength, and deprive them of their power over our hearts. And what do we gain by shining in borrowed plumage? We obtain perhaps a momentary admiration and applause. But if we excite expectations which we cannot realize, is there not some danger that this admiration and applause will soon be converted into contempt? Can we hope that those whom we have tricked into a high opinion of our abilities, or of our knowledge, or of our virtues, will not, when they discover how we have imposed upon them, be indignant at the imposition? In proportion as they had been induced to think better of us than we deserved, they will be inclined to think worse of us than we deserve; and thus whatever merit

we

we really have, will fail to make the impression which it would have made had we been contented to assume nothing beyond it.

In justice to ourselves, then, we ought to be careful how we subject our pretensions to so severe a scrutiny. Let us adhere to the simplicity of truth, and we shall have nothing to apprehend. If we fail to produce admiration, we shall produce what is much better than admiration, solid and lasting esteem.

There perhaps never was a period when the general tone of manners was more adverse to the practice of strict and genuine sincerity than the present. Those who consider themselves sent into the world for no other purpose than to please the world, must take the manners of the world as their only rule of action. But even those who do not seriously think that



that the manners of the world will justify a departure from every duty, are too apt to deem them a sufficient apology for relaxing the strictness of moral principle.

Without setting up for a reformer, and without any intention of advising you to such a hopeless undertaking at any period of your life, I can have no hesitation in exhorting you to be upon your guard against whatever has a tendency to lessen the influence of truth upon your heart. A constant practice of perverting the use of language appears to me to have this tendency; and therefore, however it may be authorized by fashion, I would advise you not to fall into it.

To frivolous minds, that are incapable of reflecting upon any subject, the use of general terms affords indeed a great relief. Those who would find it

it very difficult to tell why they are pleased or displeased, do well to shelter their want of discrimination behind a set of hyperbolical phrases, which their parrots could repeat with as good an emphasis, and apply with little less sagacity. But it is not from fools alone that we hear these exaggerations. Fools brought them into fashion, but fashion taught those who ought to set a better example to use the same language. Whatever falls short of expectation must be detestable! Whatever affords a momentary pleasure must be exquisitely charming! Whatever is in the least degree serious must be horridly stupid! or shockingly dull! It is thus that compositions of all sorts are judged of and pronounced upon, and this frequently at second-hand. And it would be well if these sweeping invectives were confined to such objects

objects of criticism. But it is thus that characters, as well as compositions, are by the lump applauded or condemned. I need not tell you that this is against the principles of justice. But it is an act of injustice into which many, who would not deliberately make a sacrifice of its principles, are insensibly led, by habituating themselves to the constant use of exaggerating epithets.

In order to avoid this error, young people ought very carefully to abstain from giving decisive opinions upon what they do not thoroughly understand; nor ought they ever to give an opinion unsupported by a reason which can fully justify it. The impressions made upon the youthful mind by whatever greatly pleases or displeases, is sufficiently vivid to bear being expressed in the simple language of truth, without any danger  
of

of its being mistaken. Accustom yourself then, I beseech you, to relate and describe with plainness and simplicity ; and depend upon it, that by so doing your descriptions will lose nothing of their force.

As to those who have cast off all regard to truth from their minds, and who believe that all are equally unprincipled as themselves, they will glory in deceiving, and expect to be deceived. The most dangerous deception which such persons practise, is that of assuming the appearance of perpetual enjoyment. Considering pleasure as the chief good, they seek it in the gratification of every selfish passion : but their vanity must likewise be gratified ; and therefore they wish to be admired, as the persons who alone have discovered the true arcana of felicity. When oppressed by a sense of weariness and disappointment,

pointment, they wear the smile of gaiety to hide their aching hearts. They are never happy, but it is the fashion to seem happy; and happy they must therefore, at all events, appear.

Against being deceived by this false appearance of happiness, I would anxiously warn you. I have heard it lamented by the blind, as a great misfortune, that from their being only seen when their spirits were exhilarated by society, they lost much of that sympathy which sensibility would have bestowed upon their situation, had the melancholy hours they spent in retirement been fully known. Were the gay votaries of pleasure to be as candid in their confessions, I believe the description of their lonely hours would prove them still more worthy of compassion. Could we read their hearts, should we then see them as

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leading a life of perpetual joy? No. We should perceive nothing but the depressing consciousness of a gloomy void. We should only hear the fretful expressions of peevishness and discontent. To avoid this scene of darkness, they again dash into society, or busy themselves in schemes of avarice or ambition. Bursting like meteors from their cloud, they shine for a moment, and again are buried in the womb of night. Inquire of such persons if they have experienced heart-felt happiness, even when they appeared most happy; and if they have no interest in deceiving, they will frankly tell you *they have not!* Why then have they devoted their lives to the pursuit of empty phantoms of felicity? Because they were destitute of the principles which alone give strength to the mind, and enable it to pursue the glorious course  
that

that leads to solid and everlasting joy.

Let us now examine how far a strict adherence to religious and moral principle will detract from our enjoyment. Let us take a fair and candid view of the evils to which they will expose us, and give to every disadvantage its due and proper weight.

If we carefully avoid entering into any pursuit that is not sanctioned by God and conscience, we must, in many instances, give offence to the worthless. By not following the multitude to do evil, we obey a precept of religion, but our conduct will be considered by the multitude as a tacit reproach on theirs. Those who have no principle will endeavour to make a strict adherence to it appear ridiculous; to the propriety and decorum enjoined by virtue they will

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give

give the name of prudery ; sincerity they will denominate folly ; and all regard to religion they will affect to consider as weakness. When wit gives to these representations her brilliant colouring, and raillery points their sting, it requires, we must confess, no small degree of firmness to remain unmoved.

The sneer of ridicule is keenly felt by ingenuous and ardent minds. The young ought therefore to be especially armed against it ; for I believe the fear of it to be the most deadly enemy to early-virtue. Consider then who are these people who take upon them to sneer at you for choosing to avoid the path of levity and folly ? Are their characters such as should make you desirous of their approbation ? Is their conduct such as to render their approbation of any consequence ? If adversity were to over-  
take



take you, are they the friends on whose judgment you would depend for advice? Are they those to whom in the hour of sorrow you would apply for consolation? No. Those who take upon them to ridicule the conduct that is guided by the integrity of principle, can have no real title to regard. They are, at the same time, filled with self-conceit, and stung with the consciousness of their own deficiencies. It is these jarring feelings which make them so very anxious to keep themselves in countenance, and to be kept in countenance by others; and how can they so easily effect this, as by throwing ridicule on the virtues which they have not courage to imitate?

If the fear of ridicule should ever lead you to be ashamed of acknowledging that you are influenced by the fear of God, before you yield to the

the temptation, consider which will expose you to the greatest evil. Remember who hath said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." Reflect likewise, that besides incurring the awful risk of being thus denied by the Saviour of the world, you by every departure from your principles lessen their habitual influence. Compare the inconvenience that may result to you from adhering to them at all events, and in all circumstances, with the consequences that will infallibly attend their dereliction, and I am persuaded you will be at no loss to determine which of the evils you ought most anxiously to avoid.

An earnest desire of doing good to  
others,

others, a desire necessarily attendant on the principles I have endeavoured to enforce, may sometimes, it must likewise be confessed, expose us to evils from which the selfish are exempted. Those who are completely engrossed by their own interest are not only less liable to imposition from their superior sagacity in detecting it, but are less liable to be selected by the designing as objects on whom their artifices may be exerted with success. An open temper and a generous heart will be more apt to fall into the snares of the crafty and perfidious than dispositions of an opposite cast; and will consequently be exposed to many a wound from which those who are for ever clothed in the armour of suspicion will undoubtedly escape. But though a hearty interest in the happiness of others may lead us into much trouble, and eventually produce

duce to us loads of care, of sorrow, and disappointment; and though it cannot be concealed that sincerity may sometimes create to us more bitter enemies than were ever made by dissimulation; still the balance of happiness will preponderate on the side of virtue. Were we to leave all idea of a future state out of the account, it would, taking in the probability of a long life, thus preponderate. For though by a firm adherence to moral integrity we may sometimes incur present inconvenience, and suffer from the sacrifice of present inclination, yet upon the whole, the advantages which will result to us, from the esteem and confidence which a course of virtue naturally inspires, will far outweigh all that we can possibly lose by pursuing it.

But "life may be short, the present  
" moment

"moment only is ours, and there-  
 fore the happiness of the present  
 moment is all our aim." Let us,  
 then, obey the impulse of our pas-  
 sions. If we are offended, let us  
 avenge the offence. Let us fill our  
 breasts with hatred and malice, and  
 exert our ingenuity to give them  
 vent. If we are proud, let us gratify  
 our pride at the expense of the feel-  
 ings and of the interest of others;  
 and those whom we cannot rise above,  
 let us endeavour to degrade. Let us  
 despise the virtue that is a reproach  
 to us; and the characters which we  
 cannot injure by our contempt, let  
 us endeavour by our calumnies to de-  
 stroy. Our time, our health, our  
 fortune, let us waste, as folly may  
 dictate, or as selfishness may prompt  
 us. And then, if true wisdom con-  
 sists in only consulting the happiness  
 of the present moment, who shall  
 dare

dare to say we have not done wisely? If, however, the present moment is to be followed by other moments that will in their turn be present, and if it proves that we have embittered these, where will then be our boasted wisdom? Now we happen to be so formed, as never to be able so entirely to cast off all regard to conscience, as to feel perfectly at ease without its approbation. Remorse for heinous crimes is not the only cause of this species of misery. Every malignant feeling and every selfish passion perturbs the peace of the mind, and renders it insusceptible of delight. Even the very absence of benevolent intention creates uneasiness and discontent. It is like a disordered stomach, which produces a feeling of want of health, without any positive malady. I leave it to those who have made the most accurate observations on life,

to.

to say, whether they have ever known a callous and selfish heart illumined by the sunshine of a cheerful temper.

As far as I have seen of human character, I have ever found those to be the happiest who took the most lively interest in the happiness of others. The consciousness of having contributed to the well-being of a fellow-creature, nay, even the consciousness of having earnestly desired to contribute to it, produces such a degree of satisfaction, as those who look with apathy on all around them never can experience. In every idea which we form of a state of perfect happiness, we unite it with an idea of complete benevolence. We in our imaginations shut the gates of Heaven against the selfish and vindictive passions; and would we wish to taste of the happiness of the truly blessed,

blessed, we must exclude them from our bosoms.

To regulate these passions and affections, becomes therefore a duty arising from the principles of justice. In justice to ourselves we must endeavour to subdue them; for, if benevolence, humility, charity, meekness, and forbearance, have a tendency to increase our happiness, we cannot in justice to ourselves neglect their cultivation. Formed as we are formed, this would be true, though we were persuaded that we had been thus formed by chance, and that God neither observes our conduct, nor will call us to account for our actions. But if we believe that there is a God, and that there is a future state in which we must be for ever happy or for ever miserable, the duty which we owe to ourselves wears a still more serious aspect.

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The use which we make of the short period of probation, fixes our fate to all eternity. This period has, as I in a former letter observed, been divided by God into several distinct parts, through which we proceed progressively to that final close, beyond which we know nothing more than God has been pleased specially to declare. Not only each of these stages of existence, but every moment spent in each of them, takes something of its colouring from the past, or gives a colouring to the future. The manner in which the hours of youth are spent, has in general an influence upon every future hour. If the habit of acting up to the degree of knowledge possessed be not then acquired, it will probably never be acquired; and present convenience or present inclination will consequently

quently become the sole principle of action.

To begin then by times to examine your own heart, and to reflect upon the motives and the consequences of your conduct, is but doing justice to your future days. If you look up to God as the witness of your actions, and to Heaven as the scene of their reward, your motives will never fail to be pure, and in their purity you will find consolation even for the errors of your judgment. But the same good principles which lead you to reflect upon your motives, will lead you to improve your judgment, by employing every opportunity of instruction to the best advantage.

I address myself to you as if you were self-dependant, and as if you were to be indebted to yourself, and  
not

not to the care of your judicious friends, for the formation of your principles. But you must see that I do this, not from any doubt of your receiving from them all the instruction possible, but from a conviction that the application of their instructions rests entirely upon the exertions of your own mind. Even the obedience due to those whom Providence has ordained to be the directors of your conduct, will be the more steady and uniform from its being the result of principle. From a principle higher than that of fear, I would have it to proceed. By connecting it with the idea of the duty which you owe to God, it will acquire strength and stability, and prove the means of increasing your benevolent affections, by the consciousness of having given satisfaction to those who are interested in your improvement.

By

By connecting the idea of every duty with the approbation of God, and of every departure from duty with his disapprobation, your principles will soon acquire strength to resist temptation. But upon what grounds does this connection rest? Upon what authority do we with so much certainty pronounce our assurance that God will visit the wicked and reward the just? 'This, my love,' is a very serious inquiry, and one upon which too much depends to be slightly answered. By giving you a clear and comprehensive view of the basis of our faith, I hope to assist you in answering it to your satisfaction.

You will then find what reason I had to assure you, that it is from religion the principles of truth and justice derive their best support. In the view I shall give you of that religion,

ligion, you will see, that to those who receive and cherish it, it must infallibly become a source of happiness, never to be exhausted ; a source of hope, which, when the world smiles upon us, will prevent us from being fascinated by its smile ; and when it frowns, will save us from being dejected by its frowns.

May the efforts of my zeal be guided by the influence of that Spirit of truth which can work conviction where earthly wisdom fails ! And may a blessing from Him who is the God of truth follow my labours !

Adieu !

END OF VOL. I.

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